Commentary
November 2003

The Terror Ahead
Gabriel Schoenfeld

On Hating the Jews
Natan Sharansky

Gay Marriage—and Marriage
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Kissinger & Chile: The Myth That Will Not Die
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Oh Dad, Dear Dad
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Charles Murray's All-Stars
Terry Teachout

Books in Review
David Frum • Leslie Lenkowsky • Sam Munson
Jonathan Kay • Thomas L. Jeffers

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Commentary

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Commentary
November 2003

Letters from Readers

Terror & Freedom

To the Editor:

In "Civil Liberties After 9/11" [July-August], Robert H. Bork demolishes several straw men but gives readers few clues to what is troubling about the policies of the Bush administration. One example: to illustrate what he portrays as knee-jerk criticism, Mr. Bork cites an ACLU ad charging that the Patriot Act goes "far beyond fighting terrorism." But the ad simply makes a factual assertion—and an accurate one at that. The Patriot Act includes over a dozen provisions enlarging government power in routine investigations unrelated to terrorism. Mr. Bork apparently does not know, or does not want his readers to know, these details.

As for his discussion captioned "Treatment of Captured Terrorists," it poses a nonissue. There is some (though not much) debate over the treatment of captured terrorists; the controversy centers instead on the treatment of *suspects*. By referring to the captives as "enemy combatants," Mr. Bork assumes away the problem. Military tribunals lack many important safeguards, but most suspects are not being offered even a military trial; the administration simply plans to hold alleged enemy combatants indefinitely. In defending this approach, Mr. Bork goes beyond considering the captives "guilty until proven innocent." He apparently considers them guilty, period.

Of course, someone seized on a foreign battlefield should not get a jury trial to determine what he was doing there. But it does not follow that such a person, if he claims to be a bystander, should (as Mr. Bork insists) have no right to a hearing at all. Under the Geneva Conventions, such a person has the right to a rudimentary military hearing; the administration knows this but maintains that the Geneva Conventions do not apply.

Mr. Bork moves quickly from the battlefield, where commanders need flexibility, to the case of José Padilla, the alleged enemy combatant arrested by FBI agents in a Chicago airport. Mr. Bork's suggestion that the Padilla case is "similar" and should be subject to the same flexible rule is a staggering non sequitur, with staggering implications. His conclusion is that an American citizen suspected of aiding al Qaeda can be held in a military brig for years, with none of the safeguards of the Bill of Rights, no access to courts, and no chance even for a hearing in the military-justice system. Mr. Bork incorrectly claims that Padilla was "indicted." But an indictment is precisely what the administration is determined to avoid, because that would give Padilla the rights to counsel and a speedy trial.

Detention under these circumstances is unconscionable and unprecedented. Padilla argues that a person arrested on U.S. soil is entitled to counsel and a trial. The defendants in *Ex parte Quirin*, the Supreme Court case cited by Mr. Bork to support his own position, were afforded those privileges. No case, including *Quirin*, suggests that captives can be treated as "unlawful combatants" without affording them a hearing.

And *Quirin* is beside the point in another respect: in that case, the Court ruled that the hearing could be in a military rather than a civilian court because the defendants were "admitted enemy invaders." That principle applies to Padilla only if there is no difference between an admitted enemy and an accused enemy. By treating Padilla's alleged terrorist involvement as a known fact, Mr. Bork again assumes away the question that should be uppermost in everyone's mind.

José Padilla has been held incommunicado for over a

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year, and his lawyers seek only the chance to respond to the charges against him. The administration would deny them that opportunity, and Mr. Bork's essay obscures the stakes in the case. COMMENTARY readers deserve better.

STEPHEN J. SCHULHOFER
New York University
Law School
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Robert H. Bork's defense of the Bush administration's antiterrorism measures is rather weak. First, it is misleading to frame the policy debate in terms of "how much individual liberty should be sacrificed." By jumping to that question right away, Mr. Bork skips over other relevant matters, such as whether we have the right people in place in our intelligence and law-enforcement agencies. In these very pages, Gabriel Schoenfeld recently exposed serious deficiencies in one of these agencies, in an article titled "How Inept Is the FBI?" [May 2002]. Before Americans are told that they must surrender more of their freedom and privacy, policymakers must seriously examine how well the government has been exercising the vast powers it already possesses.

Second, the extent to which Mr. Bork defers to the government is shocking. According to Mr. Bork, "giving someone like [José] Padilla a lawyer would frustrate the very purpose of his detention" because a lawyer would only "create delay and confusion." This is not something one expects to hear from a former nominee to the Supreme Court. Anyone inclined to join Mr. Bork in his disparagement of defense lawyers and the presumption of innocence should read Dorothy Rabinowitz's *No Crueler Tyrannies*, which details how innocent people have been railroaded into prison by overzealous prosecutors.

Third, it is ironic to see Mr. Bork, the leading champion of the "originalist" school of constitutional interpretation, argue that American citizens can be whisked away to military brigs on the say-so of the President because of a Supreme Court precedent set "as long ago as 1942." The counterargument is much more plausible: if the safeguards in the Bill of Rights can be ignored by any President who decides to invoke his powers as "commander-in-chief," the Constitution never would have been adopted in the first place.

Mr. Bork is certainly right when he says that al Qaeda represents a threat to our civilization and that our leaders need to take "appropriate" measures in response. The challenge, however, is to defend our great country without defeating ourselves.

TIMOTHY LYNCH
Cato Institute
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

Contrary to Robert H. Bork, no citizen has any way of knowing the extent to which fundamental freedoms have been abridged on account of policies implemented after 9/11. Nor, for that matter, can we evaluate the degree to which those policies may have made us less vulnerable to terrorists. Our inability to make such judgments stems from a lack in this instance of the oversight, accountability, and checks and balances that are essential to effective government. Moreover, the lack of careful deliberation on these issues in Congress and in public forums has denied us the corrective tonic that comes from vigorous debate and dissent.

The administration's efforts to promote an aura of beneficial silence may explain why Mr. Bork mentions the Patriot Act—by far the single greatest source of alarm—only in passing. That act, passed six weeks after 9/11, greatly expanded the authority of the executive branch to conduct surveillance operations, carry out clandestine searches and seizures, and compel businesses to turn over records.

To date, the Justice Department has provided Congress with only cryptic and incomplete information about how it has implemented the act, leading even the conservative Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, James Sensenbrenner, repeatedly to express concern about the resistance to oversight of Attorney General John Ashcroft's department. Sensenbrenner's concerns clearly were shared by other members of the House, which on July 22 overwhelmingly rolled back the provision of the act that allowed the Justice Department to search suspects' homes secretly without informing them that they had a warrant to do so.

The dangers of insufficient oversight are meticulously documented in a Justice Department report which found that of the 762 illegal aliens rounded up in connection with the 9/11 attacks, only one was ultimately charged with terrorism. Many detainees were physically and verbally abused, impeded from retaining lawyers, treated as criminals accused of capital offenses, and held in custody months after it was established that they posed no threat.

These abuses occurred in large part because no one outside government had any idea of what was happening. Six days after 9/11, the chief administrative judge of the Immigration and Naturalization Service instructed immigration officials to close to the public all hearings related to the detainees and to keep information related to those cases secret. Even the names of those incarcerated were not released—a decision Ashcroft claimed was intended to protect their privacy. Why not just ask their permission?

Although we disagree with much of Mr. Bork's article, we applaud him for writing it. There has been far too little public debate since 9/11 about the balance between security and liberty.

RICHARD C. LEONE
GREG ANRIG, JR.
Century Foundation
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

I am impressed with Robert H. Bork's almost childlike faith in the wisdom and benevolence of the executive branch of the federal government. Mr. Bork seems to harbor no particular concern that the government might act stupidly or maliciously, falsely accuse someone of terrorist crimes, imprison people without cause, or misuse information for political rather than for security purposes.

Much of Mr. Bork's ra-

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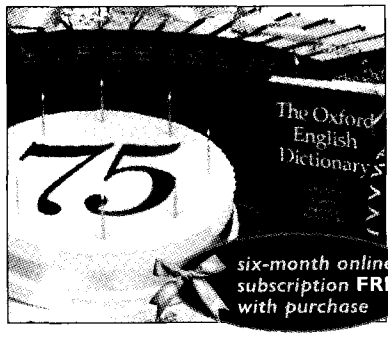

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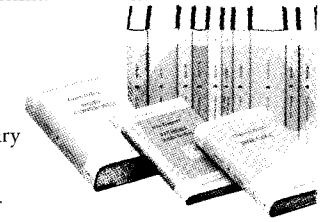

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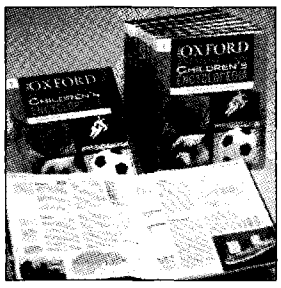

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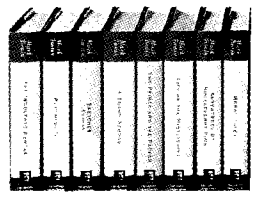

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ther quaint faith seems based on the fact that the current President has an "R" rather than a "D" after his name. I would gently suggest that threats to the Republic arise from unexpected quarters, Americans switch parties every so often, laws stay on the books, and agencies dedicated to enforcing those laws need to justify their payroll. At some point in the near future, there will likely be a Democratic President who will face threats that we cannot foresee, and those who chastise squishy-minded liberals for daring to oppose George W. Bush may be shocked when that President starts using their laws in ways that drive them crazy.

BARTON L. JACKA
San Diego, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Robert H. Bork correctly states that terrorists are distinguishable from regular criminals or lawful combatants, and that granting them full civilian or Geneva Convention rights is both impractical and unnecessary. But he may be oversimplifying when he claims that *Quirin* and other Supreme Court cases settle the issue of military tribunals. Never before has the government declared a war that may never end on an enemy that has no static definition, and thus there are legitimate distinctions between previous "wartime exceptions" and current ones. Existing precedent does not necessarily free the executive branch from judicial checks on naming, holding, and trying alleged terrorists; nor should we necessarily want it to.

JOSEPH A. CUA
Lutherville, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

I must take issue with one point in Robert H. Bork's otherwise excellent article. I agree that the vast majority of actions taken by the Department of Justice to protect Americans from terrorism are authorized by statute and are well supported by the Constitution and by precedent. But I strongly disagree with the claim that establishing formal ethnic and national-origin criteria for security checks would enhance our security or would have averted the attacks of 9/11. Indeed, by focusing our attention on just a few classes of individuals, it would run the serious risk of leaving holes in our defenses that can be easily exploited by our enemies. I do not believe that anyone in the government has seriously argued that 9/11 could have been prevented if the prescreening criteria endorsed by Mr. Bork had been permitted.

Moreover, employing such criteria would subject millions of innocent and loyal Muslim-Americans and permanent residents to frequent and humiliating security checks. This is not only unfair, it also risks antagonizing some of the very people who can most help us in our battle with radical Islamists.

Congress has enacted laws granting the government sufficient authority to take any and all actions reasonably necessary to protect us from the threat of terrorism. But these laws are neutral with respect to ethnicity. To introduce ethnic criteria would undermine public support for an already controversial law and would violate the constitutional requirement that such criteria be used only when required by a compelling government interest.

GEOFFREY KENT
Chappaqua, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

I too believe that much must be done to deal with the terrorist threat, but I disagree with Robert H. Bork that the Terrorist Information Awareness program (TIA) is necessary for the security of the nation. He is right that most of the data that would be gathered under TIA are publicly available. Yet data (merely a resource) are not information (a source of power), which is precisely why the government wants the new program.

TIA would gather *all* such data on *all* American citizens into a searchable database, transforming it into readily usable, and abusable, information. Instead of a directive from, say, the chief of the FBI's anti-terrorism group to gather data and generate information on specific suspects, anyone with access to the database could ask questions about the general populace. The questions need not be restricted to terrorism; they might be related to political and social affiliations, travel and spending patterns, telephone contacts—anything at all. With such a tool it is but a small step from queries on terrorists to queries on one's political foes and the common citizenry.

ERIK EASON
Austin, Texas

ROBERT H. BORK writes:

According to Stephen J. Schulhofer, the ACLU ad I mentioned simply makes an accurate factual assertion. That ad, as I wrote, stated that the Patriot Act goes "far beyond fighting terrorism" and has "allowed government agents to violate civil liberties—tapping deep into the private lives of innocent Americans." Aside from the falsity of that claim, it is not true that a charge of civil-liberties violation is simply a factual assertion. Mr. Schulhofer, who cropped all but the first four words quoted, and accuses me of ignorance or duplicity, might reflect that it is not a sound tactic to level an accusation of misrepresentation by beginning with a misrepresentation of one's own. He then asserts that the Patriot Act enlarges government power in investigations unrelated to terrorism, but cites nothing that might be worrisome.

I will not repeat my explanation of the reasons for detaining unlawful enemy combatants, their lack of rights under the Geneva Convention, or their ability to challenge their detentions by petition for habeas corpus. Mr. Schulhofer is right that José Padilla was never indicted—my slip—but the essential point is that both he and Yaser Esam Hamdi have had habeas petitions brought in their names, and both courts of appeal involved in their cases have held that the President is authorized by the Constitution and by law to direct the military to detain enemy combatants. Mr. Schulhofer's complaint is with the Constitution, the laws, and the courts.

Nor can the Supreme Court's 1942 decision in *Ex parte Quirin* be so easily brushed aside. The German would-be saboteurs were afforded counsel in the military tribunal precisely because they were being tried

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on charges. Padilla is not. He is held for intelligence purposes that are inconsistent with judicial trial. If he is charged with an offense, he will have counsel and a trial.

Timothy Lynch's arguments are beside the point. The effectiveness of our intelligence and law-enforcement agencies is an interesting subject but not what I was writing about. Defense lawyers and the presumption of innocence are important in a criminal trial, not when an enemy combatant is held for interrogation. In the latter case, habeas corpus is proper. The argument becomes laughable when Mr. Lynch says that an "originalist" should not rely upon a 1942 decision. That decision itself rests upon the original understanding of the Constitution. The power to detain unlawful enemy combatants and to try them before military tribunals is ancient and, in this country, goes back at least to George Washington.

In the judgment of Richard C. Leone and Greg Anrig, Jr., we have no way of knowing the extent to which freedoms may have been eroded or security enhanced. But since September 2001 and through the end of July 2003, Congress exercised oversight by holding over 100 hearings into Justice Department anti-terror activities. We have, in addition, a determined opposition party and a free press. As for the "greatly expanded" authority to conduct surveillances, clandestine searches and seizures, and so forth, this is, in fact, a moderate extension of existing authority and is in any event subject to control by judges who must authorize each action taken. The Justice Department has long had the authority, subject to judicial oversight, to search premises without telling the owner that a search has been conducted. It would be ridiculous to inform a suspected conspirator and risk destruction of evidence, intimidation of witnesses, flight, or violence, not to mention losing the ability to gather necessary evidence and disrupt terrorist operations.

Barton L. Jacka foresees the dark night of authoritarianism, but, as he has provided no details about what in our present security arrangements so affrights him, it is impossible to respond. To Joseph A. Cua, who believes the legality of military tribunals has not been settled, I would say that a consistent course of conduct over a period of better than two centuries, plus *Quirin*, does settle the issue. Given the superior performance of such tribunals and the safeguards built into them, we have reason to be grateful that they can accomplish fairly tasks for which civilian courts and juries are frequently ill-suited, not least because of the sensitive information that must often be dealt with.

Geoffrey Kent's disapproval of ethnic and national-origin profiling may be due to a misunderstanding of what is involved. For one thing, statutes require the Immigration and Naturalization Service to treat differently aliens from countries listed as state sponsors of terrorism and/or with a history of breeding terrorists. Since the countries identified are populated by Muslims and Arabs, a degree of profiling is built into our laws. For another, profiling merely means that ethnicity is one factor to be used in a total assessment; it is not sufficient in itself to warrant government action. But it is clear that ethnicity and national origin are correlated with terrorism. Given the stakes involved—the possible deaths of thousands or hundreds of thousands—it seems excessively politically correct to insist that *no* attention be paid to a factor we know to be relevant when present with other indicators.

Erik Eason's concerns about the Terrorist Information Awareness program can be dissipated by judicial control of access to the names of persons whose behavior suggests a need for further inquiry.

I have tried, not wholly successfully, to avoid repeating points made in my original article but ignored by some of my correspondents. As a rule, these letters speak of "the government" or "the executive branch" as not to be trusted with the powers necessary to combat terrorism. It must be remembered that exercise of the powers granted is subject to continuing oversight by Congress in general, and by the judiciary on a case-by-case basis.

Varieties of Anti-Semitism

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of my book *Terror and Liberalism* [July-August], David Warren complains about my discussion of the Islamist philosopher Sayyid Qutb and of Islamist anti-Semitism. Referring to me, Mr. Warren says: "He [Berman] cites such curious notions as that, in Sura 5 of the Qur'an, Allah 'transforms' the Jews of Medina 'into apes and pigs,' which suggests the magic of Circe; the received view, I believe, is that the curse was intended figuratively." Mr. Warren also argues that Qutb's anti-Semitism was "different in kind from the anti-Semitism of Christendom," and conjures its spirit in this fashion: "'Of course the Jews are pigs and monkeys, but it's nothing personal,' might be a good way to caricature Qutb's position, and that of many others."

I believe that Mr. Warren ought to be a little more cautious in advancing these points. Conventional interpretations do indeed cast a figurative and somewhat tolerant light on certain Qur'anic passages about Jews. But the whole purpose of Islamism is to make a decisive break with conventional interpretations in order to create a revolutionary social system.

Qutb argued against tolerant and figurative interpretations. It is true that, in one passage or another, he offered figurative interpretations of his own; his Qur'anic commentaries, *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, are vast, and as in any gargantuan work, the arguments lean every which way. Even so, it is not impossible to identify the principal thrust of Qutb's doctrine about the Jews. (I make this point on the basis of having read seven volumes of *In the Shade*, about half of the total work, which is all that I have been able to find in English translation, together with three of Qutb's other works in translation and a Pakistani biography

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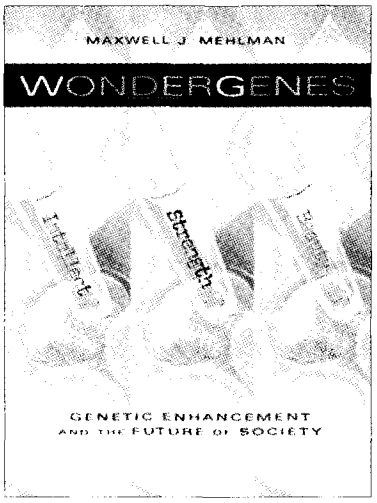

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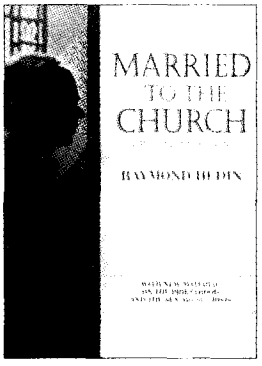

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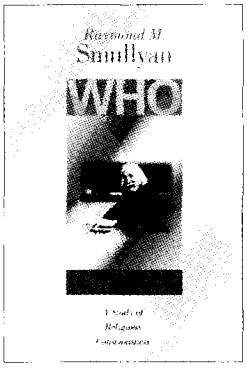

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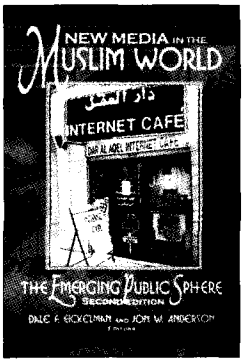

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containing a few excerpts.)

Qutb wrote at length and repeatedly about the Jews, and his opinion was nearly always harsh and frequently hateful. Nearly always he insisted on choosing the severest possible Qur'anic interpretation. He explicitly warned, in the course of discussing Sura 5, against relying on the more tolerant passages of the Qur'an itself.

Mr. Warren may suppose that Qutb's anti-Semitism, because of its Islamic origin, was "different in kind" from Christian anti-Semitism. But Qutb drew on Western sources, too. If we turn from Sura 5 to his commentary on Sura 6, we find Qutb saying about Zionism: "it tries to demolish the basic foundation of human life, so that no human community other than its own can take it as a basis for its code of living. This they state in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."

This is not different in kind from the anti-Semitism of 20th-century Europe; it is precisely the anti-Semitism of 20th-century Europe, in its extreme-Right version. Qutb's anti-Semitism, in sum, downplayed or excluded the more tolerant and traditional Islamic views, emphasized the harsher interpretations, and salted the results with classic Western anti-Semitism.

Mr. Warren expresses an enthusiasm for Bernard Lewis's new book, *The Crisis of Islam*, and especially for Lewis's analysis of Qutb. But Mr. Warren's enthusiasm may lead some readers to conclude that, in drawing a sharp line between Qutb's anti-Semitism and the anti-Semitism of the West, he is faithfully treading in Lewis's scholarly footsteps. That is not the case. Years ago, in his book *Semites and Anti-Semites*, Lewis did make a point similar to Mr. Warren's in regard to Qutb. But in *The Crisis of Islam*, Lewis adopts a new and different position. As he writes in the notes at the end of his book, "it seems likely that Sayyid Qutb's inspiration" for certain of his writings hostile to the Jews was "European or American."

One of the consequences of Qutb's mix of Islamic and Western anti-Semitism has been a cult of random slaughter—something new and heretical in the history of Islam, though old and hoary in the history of Christian Europe. The Qur'anic passage about Jews as monkeys (or apes, depending on the translation) and pigs, from Sura 5, has turned out to be significant in this modern cult. That is why I discuss the phrase in my book. One of Qutb's ultra-radical ideological heirs in the Islamist movement in Egypt, Sheikh Abel Omar Rahman of the Islamic Group, set up headquarters in Jersey City in the 1990's and denounced tourism in Egypt; and, in Egypt, Rahman's followers duly massacred tourists. In 1996, after eighteen Greek tourists were slaughtered at a Cairo hotel in the belief that they were Israelis, Rahman's organization issued a communiqué denouncing "the Jews, sons of monkeys and pigs."

Mr. Warren may dismiss the temptation to regard the phrase about monkeys and pigs as anything worrisome, and he may reassure the readers of COMMENTARY that the received interpretation is figurative. But, among the more extreme followers of Qutb, the phrase plainly expresses the kind of dehumanizing hatred that leads people to commit massacres. Let us recall that Sheikh Rahman and his group were the very people who conceived the idea of destroying the World Trade Center, which they tried to do in 1993.

Errors like these on the topic of anti-Semitism have, I believe, led many people to underestimate the dangers of our present age. I can understand why someone with an "area specialty" in Islam might be prone to make such errors (not that Bernard Lewis has done so), on the assumption that sound and conventional interpretations from the past will surely be sound and reliable for all time. But that is why it is good to draw on other literatures, too—the literature of antitotalitarianism, to begin with.

Mr. Warren makes a wisecrack about a troop carrier containing George Orwell, Sidney Hook, and Arthur Koestler (and he might have added Albert Camus, a main influence on my book)—all antitotalitarians of the mid-20th century, "left-flank variety," in his phrase. But the left flank and its literature have something to tell us about totalitarianism, not just in the European past but in the Muslim present. That is my principal point.

PAUL BERMAN
Brooklyn, New York

DAVID WARREN writes:

Paul Berman seems to be arguing that in my review of his book, I, unlike Bernard Lewis, overlook the degree to which Sayyid Qutb has bought into a very Western species of anti-Semitism. Most tellingly, he mentions Qutb's use of that old libel, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Let me start from bewilderment. Even in the 19th and 20th centuries, as I am sure Mr. Berman will agree, anti-Semitism has taken many different forms in the West, and individual anti-Semites have worked from many different motives—often vastly different in turn from those of earlier centuries. Western fanatics have tended to leap at the *Protocols*, simply because it is there. Ditto the fanatics in the East—I was not denying that Qutb was a fanatic. He reached for any weapon available, and imported Western bigotries as the terrorists have imported Western technology.

Let me make this point plain. From the fact that Arab terrorists flew Western commercial jets into the World Trade Center, it does not follow that they have embraced a Western ideology. They reach for the weapon that is available.

Next, the ideology itself. That the received Islamic worldview of the terrorists has indeed been substantially twisted by contact with totalitarian traditions in the modern and post-modern West is something on which Mr. Berman, Lewis, and I all agree. But as only Lewis and I seem to agree, the main thrust of Qutb's writing, and of the terrorists, is against *jahiliyya*—the paganizing of the Muslims. This is vastly different from the main thrust of Western totalitarian movements, which themselves aspire to paganize.

We see where we are going with this when Mr. Berman says the "cult of random slaughter" is "some-

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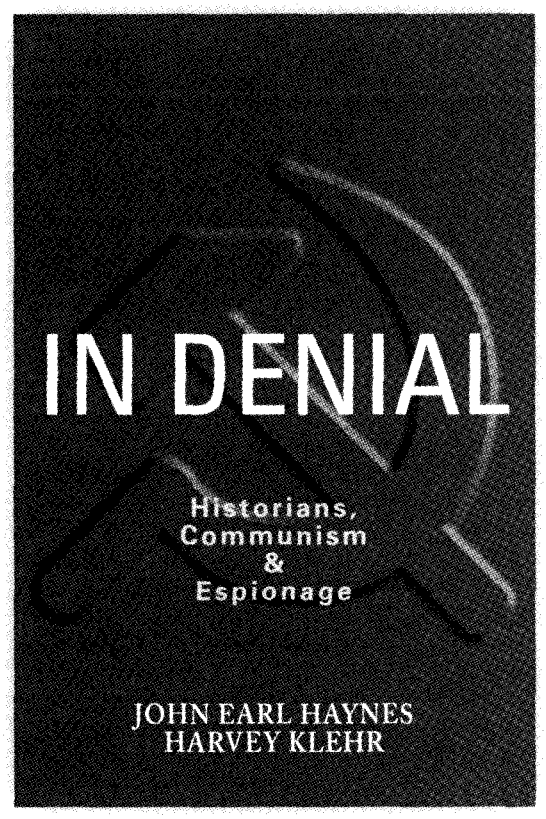

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Haynes and Klehr were the first American historians who used the newly opened archives of the former Soviet Union. They were among the first to write about the Venona intercepts. In *In Denial,* they use what they discovered to show that while the Cold War against international communism may have been won, the war over the meaning of the communist experience in America is still very hot indeed.

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thing new and heretical in the history of Islam, though old and hoary in the history of Christian Europe." That is simply not true. Arab and Muslim history is replete with pogroms against Jews—as against Buddhists, Hindus, Copts, Bahai, Armenians, Spanish Catholics, and so forth. It is foolish to grant Christians a monopoly on pogroms. (And let me assure Mr. Berman that any "cult of random slaughter" would be extremely heretical within Christianity, too.)

Moreover, the Arab rejection of the state of Israel today is flavored by a belief in the inferior, *dhimmi* status of the Jews that goes back to the Qur'an. The very acceptance of Jews (and Christians) on the part of Islam was predicated on this subordinate and humiliated status. They are "protected," yes; but so, in principle, are zoo animals.

It is the spectacle of Jews getting "out of their place" —by winning independent self-government—that strikes the deepest note within the distinctively Islamic anti-Semitism. This is different from the "Christ-killer" impulse behind much Christian anti-Semitism. It is not necessarily less virulent, or potentially less personal, but it did not arise in previous centuries because an independent Israel did not arise.

Notwithstanding my wisecrack, I, like many political conservatives, have a great deal of respect for George Orwell, Sidney Hook, Arthur Koestler, and Albert Camus. They were very helpful in the fight against Communism, and provided many useful insights into the nature of totalitarianism in general. But I do not think they are going to be a great deal of use against what we are now facing. So, on his "principal point," I am afraid Mr. Berman and I must agree to disagree.

By the Book

TO THE EDITOR:

In staging his match between the performance styles of Vladimir de Pachmann and Rudolf Serkin ["Romancing the Score," July-August], Terry Teachout distorts the facts to such consistent ends that we would like to offer a few corrections.

1. Mr. Teachout claims that Serkin played "no Liszt at all." Not true, as our book (*Rudolf Serkin: A Life*, 2003) documents, most obviously in the listing of Carnegie Hall recitals (Mr. Teachout mentions only those from 1970 on).

2. Nor is it true, as Mr. Teachout writes, that Serkin played Chopin only on "rare occasions." Works of Chopin appeared in seventeen of Serkin's Carnegie Hall recitals from 1937 to 1969.

3. When Serkin played Chopin, Mr. Teachout says, "he almost always programmed an entire book of the Etudes or the complete Preludes, Op. 28." Again untrue. In the seventeen Carnegie Hall recitals in which Serkin played Chopin, he performed entire sets of Preludes or Etudes six times, and played individual pieces by Chopin in eleven concerts.

4. Mr. Teachout claims that Serkin "did not admire the playing" of Artur Schnabel (in fact he admired much in it, though not everything) and that he "disdained Pachmann's delicate, sensuous tone." We do not know how Serkin regarded Pachmann, but we do know that the two 20th-century pianists he admired most were Sergei Rachmaninoff and Vladimir Horowitz.

Mr. Teachout's portrayal of Rudolf Serkin is a crude caricature of the complicated, intelligent, and deeply interesting musician he was.

STEPHEN LEHMANN
MARION FABER
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree with Terry Teachout that unless musical interpretation is "interesting," it is worth little, no matter how "correct" it is. Still, even if interesting, a performance must be convincing. I would suggest that the range of legitimate interpretations becomes narrower the farther back in time we go. We are unlikely, for example, to tolerate much rhythmic or dynamic flexibility in a performance of a Bach Partita, no matter how interesting it is.

The rubato of the romantic era, coupled with the emerging supremacy of the melodic line and the great enhancement of the piano's tonal range, brought with it liberties in—and thus diversity of—interpretation that had not existed before. Indeed, the very concept of interpretation, as opposed to simply "playing the notes," may well be traced back to the romantics. Liszt's (and later Rachmaninoff's) scores sometimes offered two alternatives to playing a given passage. Beethoven, in contrast, went so far as to do away with the age-old concept of the improvisational cadenza, insisting on spelling out his every note.

In gauging the persuasiveness of a performance, we are guided, I believe, by our perception of the composer's aims. A "romanticized" Beethoven is unconvincing for the same reason that a rhythmically rigid and tonally dry Chopin is unconvincing—we just know that this is not what the composer intended.

OLEG RIVKIN
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Romancing the Score," Terry Teachout wonders "whether the ability to play Chopin *and* Beethoven convincingly might be mutually exclusive." He suggests that the rhythmic flexibility and creative liberties of romantic-era pianists may be anathema to successful interpretation of the Austro-German literature, and that the neo-classical approach espoused by Rudolf Serkin, emphasizing fidelity to the score, cannot convincingly convey the depth and vitality of music by Chopin, Liszt, and other romantics. He writes that only with today's "international style," best exemplified by practitioners like Van Cliburn and Murray Perahia, has this chasm been bridged.

But Mr. Teachout's analysis ignores certain pianists of earlier generations who were indeed great interpreters of both Beethoven and Chopin. Mieczyslaw Horszowski (b. 1892), a pupil of Theodore Leschetizky—and perhaps not coincidentally Serkin's overlooked colleague at the Curtis Institute—produced supple, passionate, and free readings of Chopin, but

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In our experience treating hundreds of homosexually oriented men, we have seen the unmistakable influence of developmental experiences in the formation of homosexual thoughts and impulses.

We have observed, among other things, peer labeling, early initiation into homosexual behavior, and problematic family dynamics where, for example, a boy's mother is too emotionally intertwined with him and his father is distant. Further, and tragically, many boys are sexually molested, and many of us have observed that upon reaching adulthood, a great percentage of these boys—significantly greater than the societal average—become actively homosexual or struggle with unwanted homosexual thoughts and desires.

Still, children are being told that homosexuality is genetic and that their homosexual thoughts and desires are "who they are." They were, it is said, "born that way." (If so, then why do such a great percentage of boys who have been molested grow up to struggle with homosexuality?)

Read what gay activist and researcher Dr. Simon Le Vay says. He is the author of the famous hypothalamus, or "gay brain" study that many have cited to argue that homosexuality is genetic:

"It's important to stress what I didn't find. I did not prove that homosexuality is genetic, or find a genetic cause for being gay. I didn't show that gay men are born that way, the most common mistake people make in interpreting my work. Nor did I locate a gay center in the brain." (David Nimmons, March, 1994, *Discover*, "Sex and the Brain," Vol. 15, No. 3, p. 64-71)

And, in a related area, Camille Paglia, lesbian writer: "Homosexuality is not 'normal.' The ten percent figure, servilely repeated by the media, was pure propaganda, and it made me, as a scholar, despise gay activists for their unscrupulous disregard for the truth." (*Vamps and Tramps*, Vintage Press, NY, 1994)

It is only decent to be honest and clear when presenting an understanding of homosexuality, as this understanding can so affect an individual's personal psychological deveopment, mental health, and life choices.

Homosexuality is neither inborn, nor benign, nor unchangeable. If you want information about the process of growing out of homosexuality, or its prevention, please contact us. Further, we ask that you not take at face value what has been promulgated as regards this issue, but visit our websites and look into the matter yourselves.

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also left us with some of the greatest recordings of Beethoven's sonatas and Mozart's sonatas and concerti.

Wilhelm Backhaus (b. 1884) is justifiably considered one of the most esteemed interpreters of Beethoven's piano literature, having left two recorded cycles of the complete sonatas. But his solid, objective interpretations of Beethoven did not prevent him from producing lyrical, romantic, and heartfelt performances of Chopin. One can add interpreters like Wilhelm Kempff (b. 1895), who was renowned for his Mozart and Beethoven but also left incomparable readings of Liszt's *Années de Pèlerinage*, and the Chilean Claudio Arrau (b. 1903), who was a profound Beethoven interpreter but who also performed Chopin's Nocturnes and Impromptus and Liszt's Transcendental Etudes with depth and inner strength.

None of these interpreters was afflicted with the "love of self" that Serkin so dubiously derided in Artur Schnabel. They were, rather, caught between the end of Vladimir de Pachmann's romantic era and the beginning of the modern one. They cared deeply about the integrity of the score and their readings, yet maintained recognizable and individual styles—unlike many pianists of the so-called "international style." Just because Rudolf Serkin could not perform both Beethoven and Chopin convincingly does not mean that it is impossible.

JUSTIN URCIS
Los Angeles, California

TERRY TEACHOUT writes:

Sometimes the pieces we write in our heads fail to resemble in each and every particular the ones we set down on paper. I thought I had made it clear that in describing Rudolf Serkin's choices of repertoire, I was referring to the mature Serkin, but as I look back over "Romancing the Score," I realize that I failed to draw this distinction. Given that qualification, however, the generalizations I made about the music Serkin played turn out to be perfectly accurate. Stephen Lehmann and Marion Faber may well be guilty of the same sin, since the references to Artur Schnabel in their book appear to tell a different story from the claim they make in their letter. It is in no way clear from reading *Rudolf Serkin: A Life* that Serkin "admired much" in the playing of Schnabel (though he clearly liked Schnabel personally).

Oleg Rivkin's very interesting letter asserts as fact what I believe to be true, but I am not prepared to put forward my taste as a universal law. I myself *prefer* as a general rule to hear romantic music played by one kind of interpreter and preromantic music by another, but I can easily think of enough exceptions to be suspicious of going any farther than that. What possible relationship, for instance, does the amazingly compelling harpsichord playing of Wanda Landowska have to currently prevailing views of "correct" Bach style?

On the other hand, I do not hear what Justin Urcis hears in the playing of Wilhelm Backhaus and Claudio Arrau, both of whom have always struck me as earnest but rather dull. (Mieczyslaw Horszowski was a different story.) So far as I know, Wilhelm Kempff recorded no Chopin, and his Liszt playing, while quite beautiful, is nevertheless rooted in a Germanic performance tradition that has little to do with "conventional" ideas about how to play Liszt idiomatically.

We mourn the death of

Emil L. Fackenheim

1916-2003

Distinguished theologian and philosopher, defender of Israel and the Jewish people, friend and contributor to COMMENTARY since 1948.

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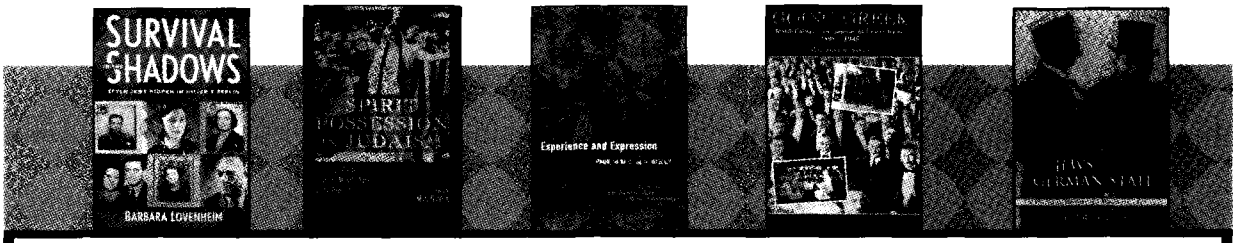

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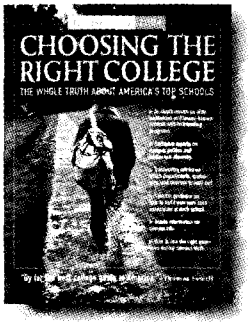

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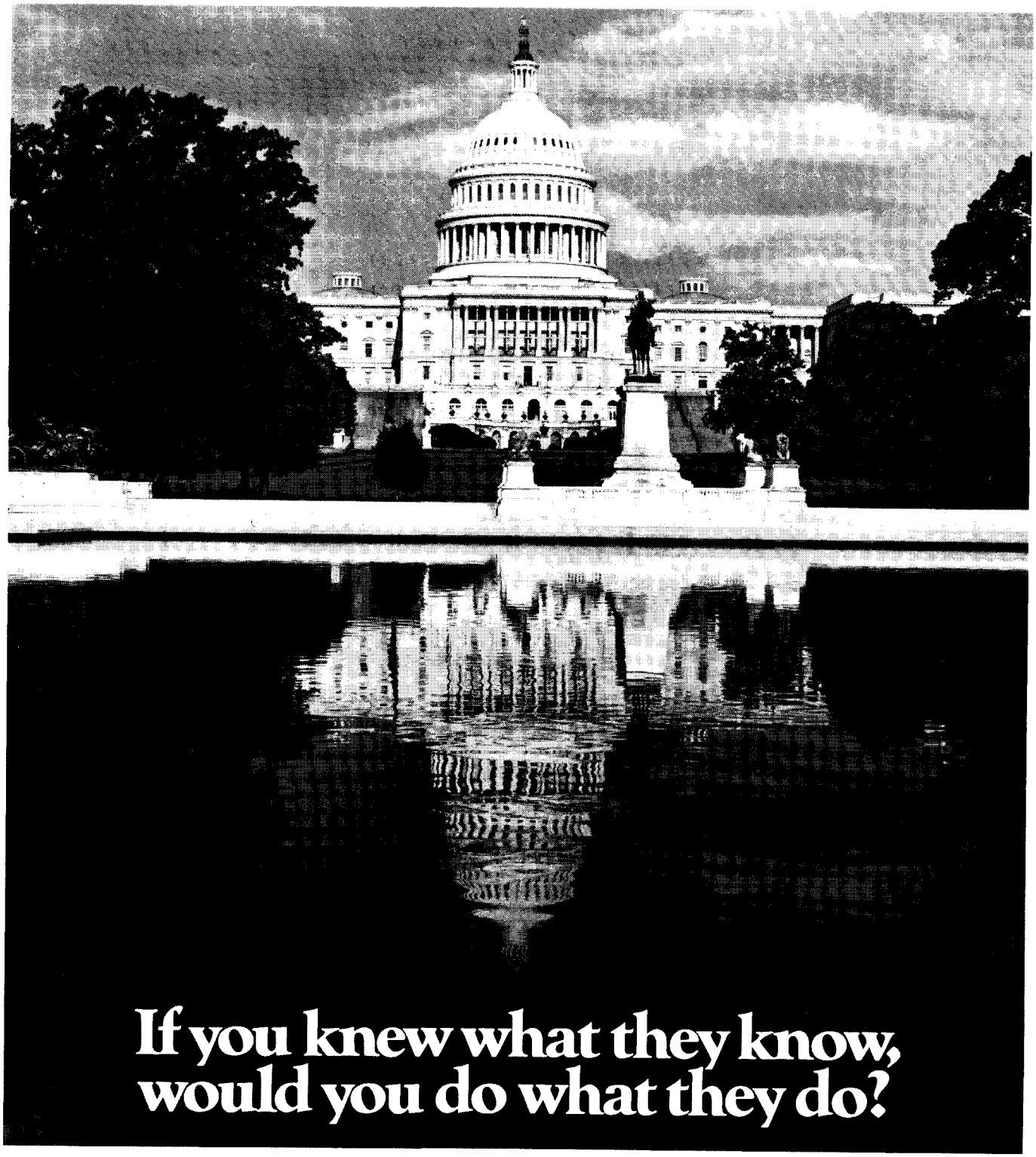

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Commentary
November 2003

The Terror Ahead

Gabriel Schoenfeld

On day 18 of the war in Iraq, a single United States Air Force B-1 bomber attacked a residence in the north of Baghdad where Saddam Hussein was believed to be hiding. The effects were dramatic. Explosions not only demolished the structure entirely but left a gigantic crater of jumbled steel and debris 60 feet deep and 150 feet wide. This devastation was caused by four conventional bombs, each weighing 2,000 pounds. They are by no means the heaviest bombs in the U.S. arsenal. The Air Force's "Daisy Cutter" weighs in at 15,000 pounds and can dig a much deeper and wider area of destruction.

But these devices, fearsome though they may be, are trivial in their effects compared with a nuclear weapon. If the destructive power of each of the bombs dropped in Baghdad was roughly equivalent to 1,000 pounds of TNT (trinitrotoluene), a nuclear bomb fueled by a single pound of a fissionable element like uranium or plutonium would release the explosive equivalent of approximately sixteen *million* pounds (eight kilotons). Over the course of the nuclear age, devices in the megaton range (millions of tons of TNT) have been developed and tested.

The tremendous force of a nuclear blast causes correspondingly greater destruction, including from its sheer heat. Whereas a conventional explosion generates temperatures nearing 9,000 degrees Fahrenheit, a nuclear detonation unleashes heat in the *millions* of degrees, which is then dispersed with terrible effect. In the initial phase, all of the material of the bomb itself—the nuclear fuel, the metal casing, the triggering device—is converted instantaneously into an intensely compressed vapor. Within less than a millionth of a second, this vapor expands into a highly luminous mass of burning air and nuclear material that ascends on its own far up into the atmosphere, reaching widths as large as thousands of feet across.

On the surface of the earth, the fireball vaporizes whatever solid materials abut the explosion, including soil and rock, which then fuse with the radioactive elements of the bomb itself and are borne aloft, gradually returning to earth as fallout: highly lethal radioactive particles ranging in width from the size of a grain of fine sand to small marbles. The rapidly expanding gas of the explosion also gives off a shock wave, a wall of air that continues to move away from the explosive center well after the fireball has disappeared. The wave generates winds exceeding several hundred miles an hour at the epicenter of the explosion and can cause destruction for miles around.

Finally, nuclear weapons yield radiation, including highly penetrating gamma rays that remain lethal over a considerable distance. The rays from a one-megaton explosion can extend approximately two miles; at one mile from ground zero, one would

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need a concrete barrier four-feet thick to afford protection from them—on the unlikely assumption one could survive the blast's other, more violent effects.

Nuclear weapons have been used in anger only twice: first at Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, and then three days later, when the Japanese still refused to capitulate, at Nagasaki. In all, the immediate death toll from the two attacks was approximately 150,000, with many more tens of thousands left gravely injured. Whatever one's view of President Truman's decision to employ the bomb against Japan, no one then or later would dispute that these are the most dreadful weapons ever devised.

Which is why, ever since their invention, a mainstay of American policy has been to prevent a surprise attack with them on our soil. During the cold war, one main leg of this effort was the policy of deterrence, aimed at convincing our principal adversary, the USSR, that a nuclear strike on the U.S. would be met by an even more devastating counterattack that would wipe the USSR from the map. The policy worked, and now that the Soviet empire is no more, we are engaged in a largely cooperative relationship with its nuclear- and non-nuclear-armed successor states.

A second leg of our effort was, and still is, aimed at keeping nuclear weapons from falling into the wrong hands. Until relatively recently, this policy too has largely been a success. Here, technology was long on our side. So considerable were the costs and expertise required to create nuclear weapons that, in the first decades after World War II, only highly developed countries—the USSR, China, England, and France (and, by the late 1960's, perhaps Israel)—succeeded in developing them on their own. But with the passage of years, the spread of civilian nuclear technology—especially nuclear power plants—and the emergence of a global cadre of nuclear engineers and physicists steadily reduced the obstacles to building such weapons. The essentials of bomb design are today widely understood, and key technologies can either be fabricated indigenously or purchased on open or black and gray markets. Only the nuclear fuel itself—plutonium or highly enriched uranium—remains exceedingly difficult to acquire, although countries with civilian nuclear-power programs can create it on their own.

The U.S. has employed a variety of diplomatic instruments to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. The primary tool—the "cornerstone of U.S. nuclear nonproliferation policies," according to a ranking Bush administration official—is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This multilateral agreement became international law in 1970 and has by now been signed by some 187 nations—all the nations of the world save three: India, Pakistan, and Israel.*

Along with lofty-sounding provisions calling for peace, the elimination of all nuclear weapons from the planet, and a number of other general goals, the NPT includes a number of specific measures. In particular, it obligates those signatories who do not already have nuclear weapons to remain in that condition, and to accept regular inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to verify that any civilian nuclear resources are under "safeguard" and are not being covertly diverted to military ends.

In some respects, the NPT has worked extremely well. Thanks to IAEA inspections, the U.S. government and the world community have access to a wealth of highly detailed information about the civilian nuclear programs of countries around the globe, including countries hostile to the United States. The NPT regime has also played a vital role in preserving the nuclear-free status of regional rivals like Argentina and Brazil, to name two countries that in the 1970's and 80's were veering into a nuclear-arms race. Perhaps the treaty's most remarkable achievement was to have fostered the *de*nuclearization of South Africa; as F. W. de Klerk, that country's former president, would confess, South Africa had surreptitiously developed a small nuclear arsenal, but then dismantled and destroyed it in order to accede to the agreement in 1991.

Such accomplishments have led supporters of the NPT to insist, in the words of the Bush administration, that the "global nuclear nonproliferation regime remains strong." But the global nuclear nonproliferation regime is not strong. It has been in serious and growing difficulty for years, and is now virtually in tatters. The story of its decline is full of the most worrisome implications for the future course of world politics. It is also a case study in the pitfalls of relying on multilateral arms-control agreements to protect critical U.S. interests.

IN RECENT years, the NPT regime has faced serious challenge from four countries, and flunked each test. In the case of only one of them—Iraq—has the crisis been definitively resolved, but at the cost of two major wars. Other dangers remain very much upon us, and they are both terrible to contemplate and difficult to avoid.

* For a discussion of Israel's nuclear-weapons program, see my article, "Thinking About the Unthinkable in the Middle East," in the December 1998 COMMENTARY.

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The history of Iraq's nuclear program exemplifies what has gone wrong. Iraq ratified the NPT in 1969 under Saddam Hussein, but the country's signature was an act of deceit. From the outset, the Iraqi dictator was seeking to acquire nuclear weapons; by the mid-1970's, assisted by avid European suppliers, he had an active program under way. By 1981, Iraqi scientists were on the verge of gaining access to a plentiful source of nuclear fuel from their new reactor at Osirak, a turn-key facility provided by France. Then, on June 7, 1981, Israel, fearing a nuclear-armed Saddam in its neighborhood, destroyed the facility in a precision airstrike that shocked the world.

Iraq responded to this setback by reconstituting its secret program, dispersing facilities widely and placing key technology in hardened shelters. Although the program's existence was widely suspected, IAEA inspectors came and went without uncovering evidence that radioactive materials were either being diverted from civilian reactors or being acquired by other means. Only in 1991, in the aftermath of the first Gulf war, did the scope and scale of Iraq's prewar efforts become evident.

Yet even in defeat, and even after having signed surrender terms pledging to disclose all information about the illicit program, Saddam Hussein's government continued to engage in denial and deception. At first it stated flatly that it had "no industrial and support facilities related to any form of atomic-energy use which have to be declared." When this statement was rebutted with incontrovertible facts by the IAEA, the regime acknowledged a handful of sites but still failed to disclose the lion's share of its activity. Only after the IAEA initiated special on-site inspections did Iraq begin to release significant information, even then omitting important details and either blocking IAEA access to key sites or hurriedly removing nuclear-related equipment from locations that inspectors were likely to visit. The full scope of the Iraqi effort become evident only when the IAEA stumbled on a trove of classified documents.

Under the noses of IAEA inspectors, those documents revealed, the Iraqis had constructed what Hans Blix, then the head of the agency, ruefully admitted was a "vast unknown, undeclared uranium-enrichment program in the billion-dollar range," constituting an essential part of "an advanced nuclear-weapons development program." Among other things, Iraq was in possession of some 400 *tons* of previously undisclosed radioactive materials, including six grams of clandestinely produced plutonium and more than 35 kilograms of highly enriched uranium—not yet bomb-grade material but of "high strategic value." Iraq had also acquired a large number of calutrons for enriching uranium; these electro-magnetic devices, used by the U.S. in constructing its first atomic bombs but subsequently abandoned in favor of more efficient means, were extremely well suited for a clandestine program like Iraq's.

It seems that, at the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, Baghdad had been only months away from acquiring a workable nuclear device. Had Saddam Hussein been a little more patient, he could have had a nuclear-equipped military *before* embarking on that aggressive adventure. Standing up to him in those circumstances would have presented incalculably greater risks to Washington and its hesitant allies in Europe.

Nor, in the aftermath of the first Gulf war, did Iraq cease its activity. A great deal of information came to light in 1995 with the defection to Jordan of Hussein Kamel, Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, who revealed a well-funded and continuing program to mount a nuclear warhead on an intermediate-range ballistic missile as well as efforts to turn highly enriched uranium into fuel for a nuclear bomb. Once again, these efforts were proceeding in the face of special IAEA and UNSCOM inspections mandated by the UN Security Council and far more intrusive than the ones for a normal country under the NPT.

What happened to Iraq's nuclear program after the mid-decade revelations, and especially after 1998 when Saddam Hussein halted all cooperation with the UN inspectors and they withdrew from the country, is unclear. As is well known, Washington based its case for the second Gulf war in part on intelligence pointing to a continuing covert Iraqi effort to acquire nuclear weapons, including the highly controversial sixteen words in President Bush's State of the Union Address about Iraq's alleged effort to purchase uranium yellowcake from the African country of Niger. But in the aftermath of our victory, the search for evidence of this program has thus far come up dry. Did the Iraqi dictator order the program transferred to new and as yet undiscovered locations, or was it dismantled and destroyed? We do not yet have the answer.

If Iraq represents one kind of failure for the NPT, Pakistan represents another—not so much of the treaty itself as of U.S. policy. The salient fact here is that Pakistan has refused to sign the pact, and is not subject to its strictures.

The Pakistani nuclear program, like Iraq's, is

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decades old. It began in earnest after the loss of East Pakistan—now Bangladesh—to India in the war of 1971, a defeat that impelled Pakistan to develop an "Islamic bomb" (in the phrase employed at the time by prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) to counter India's Hindu one. The fuel for this Islamic bomb was initially to come from a reprocessing facility provided by France in 1974, although the French and other Western suppliers withdrew as Pakistani intentions became clear. In stepped the Chinese, who in the intervening decades have provided Pakistan with technicians, highly enriched uranium, key components of enrichment facilities, and a heavy-water reactor for the production of plutonium and tritium, as well as designs for a relatively sophisticated and readily deliverable 25-kiloton-yield weapon.

Lacking recourse to the machinery of the NPT, the U.S. has responded to this Pakistani program with an assortment of carrots and sticks, pledging financial and military assistance if Pakistan would desist, threatening a series of sanctions, some of them mandated by Congress, if it pressed ahead. But the sanctions have been waived at every turn, for the simple reason that Pakistan has been a pivotal player in U.S. foreign policy as a frontline state both in the Soviet-Afghan war that began in 1979 and in the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban that began in October 2001. In any case, the sanctions were unlikely to have deflected Pakistan from a strategic goal it has perceived as vital to its national existence.

Already by the mid-1990's, Pakistan was widely believed to have obtained a small stockpile of nuclear weapons, as well as the missiles for delivering them. Its status as a nuclear power was confirmed when it conducted five underground tests on May 28, 1998. By any yardstick, this date deserves to be remembered as a watershed in international affairs, marking the first time that a certifiable basket-case of a country became an officially-declared nuclear power.

Since its birth as a nation in 1947, Pakistan's government has been regularly toppled by military coups. A major segment of the population is in the grip of radical Islam, and some leading nuclear scientists have close ties to the most fanatical Muslims of Afghanistan and al Qaeda. The country is locked in a conflict with India over the status of Kashmir that periodically threatens to become the first nuclear flashpoint since World War II. To complete the picture, Pakistan is so desperately poor that it has been paying for its military programs by barter.

Its most important partner in this arrangement happens to be North Korea. In exchange for North Korean missiles that can carry a nuclear payload, Pakistan has provided Pyongyang with gas centrifuges, a key technology for processing uranium into bomb-grade material. The U.S. response to this illicit trade has been a mild slap on the wrist: this past April, Washington imposed a two-year ban on any American dealings with the research laboratory where Pakistan's nuclear weapons are designed and fabricated.

IF PAKISTAN is a stick of dynamite, North Korea is a stick of dynamite with a lit fuse. The Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), run today by the mad Communist dictator Kim Jong Il, became a signatory of the NPT in 1985. But from the outset it declined to permit the IAEA to verify its initial accounting of nuclear materials, or to monitor more than a single one of its reactors. As the charade continued in the 1990's, the Clinton administration engaged in an intense but ultimately fruitless effort to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions, encouraging it to sign a supplementary agreement—the Yongbyon Agreed Framework, brokered by former President Jimmy Carter—that promised generous foreign aid in exchange for forbearance. North Korea grudgingly accepted the aid but, as we now know, declined to show any forbearance.†

The most dramatic chapter of this saga opened last October, when for no discernible reason Pyongyang suddenly revealed that, in violation of both the NPT and Yongbyon, it was operating an active nuclear-weapons program all along. By December it had ratcheted up the pressure, declaring the Yongbyon agreement null and void and renouncing the NPT in the bargain. On New Year's eve, all IAEA personnel were expelled from the country. In April, Pyongyang declared that it already possessed nuclear weapons and was in the midst of manufacturing more, having reprocessed the fuel from 8,000 control rods at one of its "civilian" reactors. In August, it announced that it might shortly commence test-firing nuclear weapons, something it has not yet openly done (although one of Pakistan's nuclear tests may actually have been of a North Korean device).

The North Korean regime is Stalinist to the core—and then some. Thanks to a calcified, centrally-planned economy, large portions of the country suffer from famine. Amid the general destitution, Kim Jong Il has sponsored a personality

† The record is laid out by Joshua Muravchik in "Facing Up to North Korea" in the March 2003 COMMENTARY.

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cult whose symbols and slogans are ubiquitous. His subjects speak of him with the mandatory appellation "Dear Leader" and wear a badge of his likeness on their lapels. The North Korean regime has engaged in bizarre kidnapping plots (of South Korean actors and actresses, to jump-start an indigenous film industry; of girls off beaches in Japan, to be employed as teachers of Japanese language and manners in a school for spies). Pyongyang has also engaged in terrorism. Among other violent deeds, it blew up a South Korean airliner in 1987, killing all 115 aboard.

It is this demented and venomous regime that boasts of having nuclear weapons at its disposal. According to the CIA, in addition to the one or two bombs already in its possession, the North has been "constructing a plant that could produce enough weapons-grade uranium for two or more nuclear weapons per year when fully operational—which could be as soon as mid-decade." According to another government study, Pyongyang has also been at work on two very large "electrical-generating" stations that, upon completion, will produce sufficient spent nuclear fuel to yield 200 kilograms of plutonium, enough to manufacture approximately *30* nuclear weapons a year.

Compounding the peril is the fact that North Korea has been vigorously developing intermediate- and long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. It has already successfully tested intermediate-range missiles that can strike all of Japan, points far beyond in Asia and the Pacific, and—with a reduced payload—the west coast of the United States. In September, U.S. officials reported a new model in the works with a range of 9,400 miles, a capability that would place every city in the United States under its shadow.

Not only is North Korea steadily adding missiles to its own arsenal, it is exporting them to other unsavory regimes around the world. With its ample supplies of uranium and uranium-enrichment equipment, it has threatened to export nuclear materials as well. Not only does North Korea "pose a serious and immediate challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime," in the words of Mohamed ElBaradei, the current head of the IAEA; it poses an even more serious and immediate challenge to the peace and security of the world.

Among the countries trading with North Korea is Iran, a country likewise governed by violent fanatics, of the Islamic rather than the Marxist-Leninist stripe. Iran joined the NPT at the treaty's inception. It was then still under the rule of the shah, who had started an ambitious civilian-nuclear program and possibly some weapons-related research as well. But IAEA inspectors were finally invited to visit the country's facilities only in 1992, thirteen years after the shah was deposed by the Islamic revolution. The ayatollahs appear to have calculated that, being limited to officially designated sites, the IAEA would be unable to find evidence of their secret program. If so, their calculation proved correct, for the IAEA regularly certified Iran to be in compliance with the treaty's strictures—until it became unmistakably apparent that it had been in violation all along.

Earlier this year, in the face of detailed media reports, Iran admitted to the IAEA that it had been constructing two hitherto secret plants: one to enrich uranium and another to produce heavy water, an essential ingredient in developing plutonium. The Iranians also acknowledged having imported nearly two metric tons of uranium from China in 1991, which, in a major breach of the NPT, they stored in a facility not subject to IAEA supervision. In late August and again in late September, IAEA inspections turned up traces of uranium on equipment in supposedly non-nuclear facilities, leading the agency to conclude that an illicit enrichment program was under way. Commented ElBaradei: "This worries us greatly."

Iran is an oil-rich country. It has no need for an ambitious civilian nuclear-energy industry. The fact that it has been vigorously developing one was a red flag that the ayatollahs did not deign to conceal. To augment the menace, Iran is "the most active state sponsor of terrorism" in the world, according to the U.S. Department of State. Tehran has carried out a series of kidnappings and assassinations in Europe. It has funded and provided training and arms to a variety of Palestinian terrorist organizations, including Hizballah, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and factions within Yasir Arafat's PLO. It was almost certainly behind the bombings in Argentina of the Israeli embassy in March 1992, killing 29, and the Jewish community center in July 1994, killing 86. It is thought to have had a hand in the June 1996 bombing of the al-Khobar barracks in Saudi Arabia that took the lives of nineteen U.S. soldiers. It has ties with al Qaeda and, in the wake of September 11, may have given shelter to some of its leading operatives. The list goes on and on.

To augment the menace even more, Iran has also been building missiles at a feverish pace. In July it successfully tested the Shehab-3 (a variant of the No Dong missile first provided to it by North

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Korea), with a range of 930 miles and capable of carrying a small nuclear warhead. Iranian engineers are similarly moving forward with the Shehab-4 and Shehab-5, with ranges of 1,240 and 3,100 miles respectively. Brigadier General Safavi, who heads Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, declared not long ago that "Iranian missiles can cause irreparable damage to either Israel or the United States." This is partly bluster. Israel indeed lies within range of Iranian missiles. The United States does not—not yet.

PERHAPS BECAUSE the attention of our policy makers has been diverted elsewhere, perhaps because our military resources are stretched thin in Afghanistan and Iraq, perhaps because the options are all so unattractive, perhaps because the issues are so dire, the twin challenge presented by North Korea and Iran has met with an even more muted American response than has the challenge posed by Pakistan.

In Asia, the U.S. has been engaged in desultory six-way talks with North Korea and its neighbors. The idea is to bring pressure to bear on Pyongyang, especially from China and Russia, while also holding out the prospect of still more aid if North Korea dismantles its program in a verifiable way. It would be something of a miracle if the talks were to succeed; this approach has been tried in the past and failed.

Under the Yongbyon framework, the Clinton administration plied North Korea with huge shipments of oil. It also promised two proliferation-resistant light-water nuclear reactors if Pyongyang would only promise to stop developing the bomb. In a magnanimous gesture during Clinton's final year in office, Madeleine Albright became the first American cabinet member ever to visit Communist Pyongyang—following which, noting "important progress" in talks about missile exports, the administration eased longstanding sanctions against the North under the Trading with the Enemy Act, the Defense Production Act, and the Export Administration Act. But there was no "important progress": North Korea did not limit its missile exports or do anything else, except, presumably, absorb a lesson or two about American credulity. In the end, one may hope that it will turn out to be an incorrect lesson; but if, today, the North Koreans make preposterous demands and feign outrage when we do not yield, at least we have some inkling why.

The American reaction to developments in Iran has been even quieter. Once again, we have attempted to work in concert with neighbors and, especially, the IAEA to pressure the ayatollahs to adhere to their obligations under the NPT or face the disapprobation of the UN Security Council. The IAEA is also seeking Iran's signature on a supplementary protocol that would make the country more "transparent" to inspectors. The success of these initiatives may be judged by the fact that Ayatollah Khatami, Iran's "moderate" president, has pledged continued fealty to the NPT even as his regime blatantly breaches its provisions. Other influential clerics, including Ayatollah Jannati, head of the Guardian Council and closely aligned with Iran's "hardline" supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, have urged that the government shun the "extra humiliation" of the new protocol and follow the path of North Korea by withdrawing from the NPT altogether.

HOW NORTH KOREA and Iran will conduct themselves in the months to come is a matter of speculation. Many different behaviors are possible, ranging from delaying tactics to phony concessions to threats of aggression. But, the immediate future aside, the predicament we are in is as unmistakable as is our apparent determination to ignore or deny it.

The NPT regime is radically flawed. Three countries whose facilities have been under its safeguards have managed either to develop nuclear weapons or to come perilously close to it. This has occurred because the NPT exhibits almost all the classical problems of arms-control agreements as Washington has pursued them. Elaborate mechanisms are put in place that seem to ensure the achievement of desirable objectives. Yet, in the absence of airtight verification procedures, the only countries thereby restrained are the law-abiding ones who are not themselves a menace. In the meantime, determined cheaters like Iraq, Iran, and North Korea make use of loopholes to pursue their objectives. Though the NPT appeared to work well in its early years, when the relevant technology was more difficult to acquire, now it serves mostly as a cover for would-be proliferators, offering assurances to the world that everything is fine and encouraging Washington to slumber when it needs most to be alert.

The NPT also exhibits structural defects specific unto itself. IAEA inspectors, of whom there are only several hundred responsible for policing approximately 1,000 nuclear facilities around the world, can barely do their job as it is. They are spread even thinner by the need to devote the same amount of attention to wholly innocuous programs

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in countries like Canada as they do to suspicious ones in countries like Iran. At the same time, IAEA officials lack the freedom to conduct unfettered inspections of any site they choose; they can only visit sites declared (by the signatory nation) to be under the IAEA's "safeguard." And even if they were granted more sweeping rights, the idea that they could find undeclared facilities on their own in a country attempting to conceal them is a delusion. Finally, a glaring loophole in the treaty exempts states from declaring a nuclear installation until 180 days before introducing radioactive material into it; this is precisely the escape mechanism that Iran has exploited to build the uranium and plutonium facilities it has only now disclosed.

In theory the NPT could be strengthened by closing its loopholes and mandating intrusive inspections of sites selected by the inspectors themselves. But the political obstacles would be formidable, and the countries of greatest concern would almost certainly demur. Even if there were universal agreement about amending the NPT, moreover, it would remain only as strong as the will of its strongest members to enforce it. Thus far, with the exception of the decisive action taken on two occasions by the United States against Iraq, that will has been absent. One should note, of course, that even here, Iraqi breaches of the NPT were not a casus belli cited by the U.S. before either Gulf war.

As for Pakistan, as a non-member state, it would of course not be directly touched by any changes to the NPT. For the moment, unlike Pyongyang and Tehran, the government of Pakistan does still seem capable of making rational choices. But if that situation were to change, and radical Islamists were to ascend to power, the prospect that Pakistani nuclear weapons might be transferred to the remnants of al Qaeda or to other Islamic terrorists would be intolerable. Both India and the United States would feel under tremendous pressure to disarm Islamabad, a step that in the logic of things would quite possibly require a nuclear first strike.

U.S. influence on the future course of Pakistani politics is quite limited. Where the U.S. might play an active role right now is in making it utterly clear to our ostensible ally that unless it ceases to export its nuclear know-how and materials to rogue states, it will be made to pay a very stiff price. Similar efforts might also be made to rein in or punish other exporters of nuclear material, including not only Pakistan and North Korea but also Russia, China, and France.

The radical insufficiency of the NPT confirms once again the wisdom of deploying a missile-defense shield. This project, widely ridiculed when it was first proposed by Ronald Reagan in the 1980's, has become an urgent national imperative. The U.S. needs a strategic system to defend its own skies, and portable ship- or air-borne theater systems to defend its allies.

But even if we could deploy an impermeable missile shield tomorrow (and no missile shield is likely to be impermeable), there are other ways than missiles to deliver nuclear weapons. Such weapons can be packed into shipping containers and brought into American ports, or smuggled across our borders wrapped inside, say, a bale of marijuana. Countering this particular facet of the threat defensively is virtually impossible—a fact that points toward yet another urgent imperative.

In the National Security Strategy he unveiled at West Point in June 2002, President Bush enunciated a doctrine of preemption. Certain kinds of international challenges, he said, must be forcibly answered before the evidence of danger is presented to us in the shape of a mushroom cloud. The United States, Bush declared,

> can no longer solely rely on a reactive posture as we have in the past. The inability to deter a potential attacker, the immediacy of today's threats, and the magnitude of the potential harm that could be caused by our adversaries' choice of weapons, do not permit that option. We cannot let our enemies strike first.

This was precisely Israel's thinking when it destroyed Iraq's reactor at Osirak in 1981. At the time, Israel's action was condemned by all the countries of the world, including the United States. In its unanimous resolution, the UN Security Council asserted that Iraq was a member in good standing of the NPT, had "accepted [IAEA] safeguards on its nuclear activities, and . . . these safeguards have been satisfactorily applied to date." It went on to denounce Israel's raid as a "danger to international peace."

We can now see things as they are—that is, just as the government of Israel saw them in 1981. In the aftermath of September 11, fanatical anti-American regimes like those ruling Iran and North Korea cannot be permitted to obtain weapons that can be easily hidden and used without warning to destroy entire cities in an instant. If peaceful means of persuasion have been exhausted, it is incumbent on us to consider, coolly, other means.

Unfortunately, military action is not likely to be

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as simple as it was for Israel at Osirak—not that that operation was in the least simple. Rehearsed for months by the Israeli air force, it required up-to-date intelligence, superb airmanship, and total surprise to succeed. It also had to be done within a narrow window of time, before the reactor went critical; otherwise, there was a real possibility of radiological contamination over a large area.

In both North Korea and Iran, the radioactive elements are already in place and hence some level of contamination would be likely in a preemptive strike. There are other major difficulties as well. Although Iran is without question the easier country to hit, the locations of its nuclear facilities being well-known and within range of American warships and bases, the sites there are nevertheless widely dispersed, guarded by air-defense systems, and in some cases built underground and protected by heavy layers of reinforced concrete. A successful strike would need to be broad-based and sustained and include very heavy bunker-busting weapons.

As for Iran's ability to retaliate, that is limited but not insignificant. Though it has attempted to modernize its forces in the aftermath of its war with Iraq, the pace has been slowed by a general shortage of cash. That shortage, indeed, is one reason Tehran has confined itself to a narrow buildup, focusing on the acquisition of unconventional weapons—not only nuclear but also chemical and biological—and the shells and missiles to deliver them. It has also invested in its navy, with the idea of being able to choke off Western supplies of oil by obstructing the Persian Gulf. Its final point of leverage lies in its command of terrorist forces like Hizballah in Lebanon and elsewhere, which in a crisis could be used to divert Western arms.

In a worst case, a preemptive strike against Iran might lead to a medium-sized conflagration involving unconventional weapons. Nevertheless, given Iran's overwhelming weakness, this contest would be one in which the U.S. and its allies would rapidly prevail. That in itself holds out a faint ray of hope—namely, that the very threat of a preemptive strike, especially if it is preceded by a visible military buildup and an ultimatum, might possibly persuade the ayatollahs to stand down and relinquish their nuclear ambitions.

North Korea is a much trickier problem. Some facilities are buried deep inside mountains and cannot be readily attacked and destroyed from the air. Others we may not know about at all. The regime itself is highly secretive, and unless the U.S. had reliable and timely intelligence about the whereabouts of Kim Jong Il and his top lieutenants, exceptional luck would be required to decapitate it by means of a conventional blow. Even if we did get lucky, there would still be the possibility of a North Korean response.

Not only does the North appear to have deliverable nuclear weapons, it also has one of the world's largest armies, comprising 1.2 million soldiers, some 70 percent of whom are positioned in and around the 12,000 underground bunkers near the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas. These forces are armed with approximately 10,000 artillery pieces and over 800 missiles capable of reaching South Korea and some of its neighbors. In addition, they are equipped with 2,500 multiple-rocket launchers capable of firing (by a conservative estimate) 500,000 shells an hour to a range of 33 miles. The city of Seoul, situated 24 miles from the DMZ and with a population of more than ten million, could be devastated within hours.

That is the bad news. The better news is that North Korea is not ten or even six feet tall. Its military equipment consists of aging Soviet and Chinese stocks that qualitatively are vastly inferior to both the U.S. and South Korean militaries. Its army is large to the point of bloat; significant numbers of conscripts are engaged in forced-labor projects that have little or no military significance. The populace from which these troops are drawn is hungry and downtrodden, and many soldiers are undoubtedly hungry as well. It is an open question whether, if push came to war, North Korea's military would disintegrate on its own, and with it the Communist regime.

IN THE final analysis, we cannot know with any certainty how such preemptive actions would play out. We can be certain only of this: as the danger looms closer, the divas of peace at any price will begin their predictable serenades. It is "vital," says Jimmy Carter, "that some accommodation" be reached with Pyongyang, a regime that "feels increasingly threatened by being branded an 'axis of evil' member." The *New York Times*, for its part, editorializes that "diplomacy is the only acceptable alternative," just as it editorialized back in 1995 when, lauding the "accommodation" with North Korea achieved by the same Jimmy Carter, it urged the Clinton administration to strike a similar "bargain" with the ayatollahs in Tehran.

Curiously enough, even the notoriously cautious Clintonites may, at the time, have had doubts about the efficacy of this course of inaction where North Korea was concerned. In fact, if a recent article by

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then-Secretary of Defense William B. Perry and Assistant Secretary of Defense Ashton J. Carter is to be believed, the administration seriously weighed a preemptive attack on the North's weapons-producing site at Yongbyon. The Clinton team, Perry and Carter write,

> readied a detailed plan to attack the Yongbyon facility with precision-guided bombs. We were highly confident that it could be destroyed without causing a meltdown that would release radioactivity into the air. The plutonium would be entombed, and the special buildings nearby designed to reprocess the reactor fuel into bomb material would also be leveled.

To be sure, there was the worry of a "spasmodic" North Korean response that would cost the lives of thousands of U.S. troops, tens of thousands of South Korean troops, and an untold number of civilians. Nevertheless, Perry and Carter conclude, "we believed that the nuclear program on which North Korea was embarked was even more dangerous, and [we] were prepared to risk a war to stop it." Indeed, it was only when Jimmy Carter stepped in to "solve" the problem through his brand of personal diplomacy that the plan for preemptive war was dropped.*

Needless to say, the North Korean problem was not solved and a crucial decade has been lost. Today, while our forces are engaged in a major open-ended operation in Iraq, a minor open-ended operation in Afghanistan, and a global war against al Qaeda, we are quietly sliding into the gravest crisis of this kind since Nikita Khrushchev placed nuclear-tipped missiles in Cuba. Two crazy states—both charter members of what President Bush has rightly called the "axis of evil," both openly flouting an international treaty to which they are party, both perpetrators of acts of international terrorism, both animated by a blistering hatred for America and the West—are bent on acquiring weapons of unthinkable destructive power. The CIA, as it admits in its own statements, does not know what it needs to know about either country, except that North Korea almost certainly possesses two or more fully operational bombs and could have as many as ten within months, while Iran is at most several years away from acquiring the bomb unless it purchases one or more tomorrow or next week or next month from Pyongyang.

Whatever the constraints on our resources, the challenge is unmistakable and cannot be dodged. The price of action is likely to be high, very high; the price of inaction is likely to be much higher. Courtesy of Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda, we have already had to relearn the lesson of Pearl Harbor in a second and more terrible form. In the age of terrorism and nuclear weapons, we cannot afford to relearn it a third time and a fourth.

* The *Washington Post*, October 20, 2002. Perry and Carter may be engaged here in historical revisionism, designed to make timorousness look like toughness. In open testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1995, Perry stated flatly that he and his advisers only *considered* destroying North Korea's nuclear installations but did not advocate this to the President. Instead, they recommended the imposition of sanctions, plus a military build-up in case the sanctions provoked a North Korean first strike.

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On Hating the Jews

Natan Sharansky

No hatred has as rich and as lethal a history as anti-Semitism—"the longest hatred," as the historian Robert Wistrich has dubbed it. Over the millennia, anti-Semitism has infected a multitude of peoples, religions, and civilizations, in the process inflicting a host of terrors on its Jewish victims. But while there is no disputing the impressive reach of the phenomenon, there is surprisingly little agreement about its cause or causes.

Indeed, finding a single cause would seem too daunting a task—the incidence of anti-Semitism is too frequent, the time span too broad, the locales too numerous, the circumstances too varied. No doubt that is why some scholars have come to regard every outbreak as essentially unique, denying that a straight line can be drawn from the anti-Semitism of the ancient world to that of today. Whether it is the attack on the Jews of Alexandria in 38 c.e. or the ones that took place 200 years earlier in ancient Jerusalem, whether it is the Dreyfus affair in 1890's France or *Kristallnacht* in late-1930's Germany—each incident is seen as the outcome of a distinctive mix of political, social, economic, cultural, and religious forces that preclude the possibility of a deeper or recurring cause.

A less extreme version of this same approach identifies certain patterns of anti-Semitism, but only within individual and discrete "eras." In particular, a distinction is drawn between the religiously based hatred of the Middle Ages and the racially based hatred of the modern era. Responsibility for the anti-Semitic waves that engulfed Europe from the age of Constantine to the dawn of the Enlightenment is laid largely at the foot of the Church and its offshoots, while the convulsions that erupted over the course of the next three centuries are viewed as the byproduct of the rise of virulent nationalism.

Obviously, separating out incidents or eras has its advantages, enabling researchers to focus more intensively on specific circumstances and to examine individual outbreaks from start to finish. But what such analyses may gain in local explanatory power they sacrifice in comprehensiveness. Besides, if every incident or era of anti-Semitism is largely distinct from every other, how to explain the cumulative ferocity of the phenomenon?

As if in response to this question, some scholars have attempted to offer more sweeping, trans-historical explanations. Perhaps the two best known are the "scapegoat" theory, according to which tensions within society are regulated and released by blaming a weaker group, often the Jews, for whatever is troubling the majority, and the "demonization" theory, according to which Jews have been cast into the role of the "oth-

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er" by the seemingly perennial need to reject those who are ethnically, religiously, or racially different.

Clearly, in this sociological approach, anti-Semitism emerges as a Jewish phenomenon in name only. Rather, it is but one variant in a family of hatreds that include racism and xenophobia. Thus, the specifically anti-Jewish violence in Russia at the turn of the 20th century has as much in common with the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia at the turn of the 21st as it does with the massacres of Jews in the Ukraine in the mid-1600's. Taken to its logical conclusion, this theory would redefine the Holocaust—at the hands of some scholars, it *has* redefined the Holocaust—as humanity's most destructive act of racism rather than as the most murderous campaign ever directed against the Jews.

Reacting to such universalizing tendencies a half-century ago, Hannah Arendt cited a piece of dialogue from "a joke which was told after the first World War":

> An anti-Semite claimed that the Jews had caused the war; the reply was: Yes, the Jews and the bicyclists. Why the bicyclists? asks the one. Why the Jews? asks the other.

George Orwell offered a similar observation in 1944: "However true the scapegoat theory may be in general terms, it does not explain why the Jews rather than some other minority group are picked on, nor does it make clear what they are the scapegoat for."

Whatever the shortcomings of these approaches may be, I have to admit that my own track record as a theorist is no better.

Three decades ago, as a young dissident in the Soviet Union, I compiled underground reports on anti-Semitism for foreign journalists and Western diplomats. At the time, I firmly believed that the cause of the "disease" was totalitarianism, and that democracy was the way to cure it. Once the Soviet regime came to be replaced by democratic rule, I figured, anti-Semitism was bound to wither away. In the struggle toward that goal, the free world, which in the aftermath of the Holocaust appeared to have inoculated itself against a recurrence of murderous anti-Jewish hatred, was our natural ally, the one political entity with both the means and the will to combat the great evil.

Today I know better. This year, following publication of a report by an Israeli government forum charged with addressing the issue of anti-Semitism, I invited to my office the ambassadors of the two countries that have outpaced all others in the frequency and intensity of anti-Jewish attacks within their borders. The emissaries were from France and Belgium—two mature democracies in the heart of Western Europe. It was in these ostensible bastions of enlightenment and tolerance that Jewish cemeteries were being desecrated, children assaulted, synagogues scorched.

To be sure, the anti-Semitism now pervasive in Western Europe is very different from the anti-Semitism I encountered a generation ago in the Soviet Union. In the latter, it was nurtured by systematic, government-imposed discrimination against Jews. In the former, it has largely been condemned and opposed by governments (though far less vigilantly than it should be). But this only makes anti-Semitism in the democracies more disturbing, shattering the illusion—which was hardly mine alone—that representative governance is an infallible antidote to active hatred of Jews.

Another shattered illusion is even more pertinent to our search. Shocked by the visceral anti-Semitism he witnessed at the Dreyfus trial in supposedly enlightened France, Theodor Herzl, the founder of modern Zionism, became convinced that the primary cause of anti-Semitism was the anomalous condition of the Jews: a people without a polity of its own. In his seminal work, *The Jewish State* (1896), published two years after the trial, Herzl envisioned the creation of such a Jewish polity and predicted that a mass emigration to it of European Jews would spell the end of anti-Semitism. Although his seemingly utopian political treatise would turn out to be one of the 20th century's most prescient books, on this point history has not been kind to Herzl; no one would seriously argue today that anti-Semitism came to a halt with the founding of the state of Israel. To the contrary, this particular illusion has come full circle: while Herzl and most Zionists after him believed that the emergence of a Jewish state would end anti-Semitism, an increasing number of people today, including some Jews, are convinced that anti-Semitism will end only with the *disappearance* of the Jewish state.

I first encountered this idea quite a long time ago, in the Soviet Union. In the period before, during, and after the Six-Day war of June 1967—a time when I and many others were experiencing a heady reawakening of our Jewish identity—the Soviet press was filled with scathing attacks on Israel and Zionism, and a wave of official anti-Semitism was unleashed to accompany them. To quite a few Soviet Jews who had been trying their best to melt into Soviet life, Israel suddenly became a jarring reminder of their true status in the "workers' paradise": trapped in a world where they were free

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neither to live openly as Jews nor to escape the stigma of their Jewishness. To these Jews, Israel came to seem part of the problem, not (as it was for me and others) part of the solution. Expressing what was no doubt a shared sentiment, a distant relative of mine quipped: "If only Israel didn't exist, everything would be all right."

In the decades since, and especially over the last three years, the notion that Israel is one of the primary causes of anti-Semitism, if not *the* primary cause, has gained much wider currency. The world, we are told by friend and foe alike, increasingly hates Jews because it increasingly hates Israel. Surely this is what the Belgian ambassador had in mind when he informed me during his visit that anti-Semitism in his country would cease once Belgians no longer had to watch pictures on television of Israeli Jews oppressing Palestinian Arabs.

OBVIOUSLY, THE state of Israel cannot be the cause of a phenomenon that predates it by over 2,000 years. But might it be properly regarded as the cause of *contemporary* anti-Semitism? What is certain is that, everywhere one looks, the Jewish state does appear to be at the center of the anti-Semitic storm—and nowhere more so, of course, than in the Middle East.

The rise in viciously anti-Semitic content disseminated through state-run Arab media is quite staggering, and has been thoroughly documented. Arab propagandists, journalists, and scholars now regularly employ the methods and the vocabulary used to demonize European Jews for centuries—calling Jews Christ-killers, charging them with poisoning non-Jews, fabricating blood libels, and the like. In a region where the Christian faith has few adherents, a lurid and time-worn Christian anti-Semitism boasts an enormous following.

To take only one example: this past February, the Egyptian government, formally at peace with Israel, saw fit to broadcast on its state-run television a 41-part series based on the infamous Czarist forgery about a global Jewish conspiracy to dominate humanity, the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. To ensure the highest ratings, the show was first aired, in prime time, just as millions of families were breaking their traditional Ramadan fast; Arab satellite television then rebroadcast the series to tens of millions more throughout the Middle East.

In Europe, the connection between Israel and anti-Semitism is equally conspicuous. For one thing, the timing and nature of the attacks on European Jews, whether physical or verbal, have all revolved around Israel, and the anti-Semitic wave itself, which began soon after the Palestinians launched their terrorist campaign against the Jewish state in September 2000, reached a peak (so far) when Israel initiated Operation Defensive Shield at the end of March 2002, a month in which 125 Israelis had been killed by terrorists.

Though most of the physical attacks in Europe were perpetrated by Muslims, most of the verbal and cultural assaults came from European elites. Thus, the Italian newspaper *La Stampa* published a cartoon of an infant Jesus lying at the foot of an Israeli tank, pleading, "Don't tell me they want to kill me again." The frequent comparisons of Ariel Sharon to Adolf Hitler, of Israelis to Nazis, and of Palestinians to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were not the work of hooligans spray-painting graffiti on the wall of a synagogue but of university educators and sophisticated columnists. As the Nobel Prize-winning author José Saramago declared of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians: "We can compare it with what happened at Auschwitz."

The centrality of Israel to the revival of a more generalized anti-Semitism is also evident in the international arena. Almost a year after the current round of Palestinian violence began, and after hundreds of Israelis had already been killed in buses, discos, and pizzerias, a so-called "World Conference against Racism" was held under the auspices of the United Nations in Durban, South Africa. It turned into an anti-Semitic circus, with the Jewish state being accused of everything from racism and apartheid to crimes against humanity and genocide. In this theater of the absurd, the Jews themselves were turned into perpetrators of anti-Semitism, as Israel was denounced for its "Zionist practices against Semitism"—the Semitism, that is to say, of the Palestinian Arabs.

Naturally, then, in searching for the "root cause" of anti-Semitism, the Jewish state would appear to be the prime suspect. But Israel, it should be clear, is not guilty. The Jewish state is no more the cause of anti-Semitism today than the absence of a Jewish state was its cause a century ago.

To see why, we must first appreciate that the always specious line between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism has now become completely blurred: Israel has effectively become the world's Jew. From Middle Eastern mosques, the bloodcurdling cry is not "Death to the Israelis," but "Death to the Jews." In more civilized circles, a columnist for the London *Observer* proudly announces that he does not read published letters in support of Israel that are signed by Jews. (That the complaints commission for the British press found nothing amiss in this statement only goes to show how far things have changed since

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Orwell wrote of Britain in 1945 that "it is not at present possible, indeed, that anti-Semitism should become respectable.") When discussion at fashionable European dinner parties turns to the Middle East, the air, we have been reliably informed, turns blue with old-fashioned anti-Semitism.

No less revealing is what might be called the mechanics of the discussion. For centuries, a clear sign of the anti-Semitic impulse at work has been the use of the double standard: social behavior that in others passes without comment or with the mildest questioning becomes, when exhibited by Jews, a pretext for wholesale group denunciation. Such double standards are applied just as recklessly today to the Jewish state. It is democratic Israel, not any of the dozens of tyrannies represented in the United Nations General Assembly, that that body singles out for condemnation in over two dozen resolutions each year; it is against Israel—not Cuba, North Korea, China, or Iran—that the UN human-rights commission, chaired recently by a lily-pure Libya, directs nearly a third of its official ire; it is Israel whose alleged misbehavior provoked the only joint session ever held by the signatories to the Geneva Convention; it is Israel, alone among nations, that has lately been targeted by Western campaigns of divestment; it is Israel's Magen David Adom, alone among ambulance services in the world, that is denied membership in the International Red Cross; it is Israeli scholars, alone among academics in the world, who are denied grants and prevented from publishing articles in prestigious journals. The list goes on and on.

The idea that Israel has become the world's Jew and that anti-Zionism is a substitute for anti-Semitism is certainly not new. Years ago, Norman Podhoretz observed that the Jewish state "has become the touchstone of attitudes toward the Jewish people, and anti-Zionism has become the most relevant form of anti-Semitism." And well before that, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was even more unequivocal:

> You declare, my friend, that you do not hate the Jews, you are merely "anti-Zionist." And I say, let the truth ring forth from the high mountain tops, let it echo through the valleys of God's green earth; when people criticize Zionism, they mean Jews—this is God's own truth.

But if Israel is indeed nothing more than the world's Jew, then to say that the world increasingly hates Jews because the world increasingly hates Israel means as much, or as little, as saying that the world hates Jews because the world hates Jews. We still need to know: why?

This may be a good juncture to let the anti-Semites speak for themselves.

Here is the reasoning invoked by Haman, the infamous viceroy of Persia in the biblical book of Esther, to convince his king to order the annihilation of the Jews:

> There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom, and *their laws are different* from those of other peoples, and the king's laws they do not keep, so that it is of no benefit for the king to tolerate them. If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed. [emphasis added]

This is hardly the only ancient source pointing to the Jews' incorrigible separateness, or their rejection of the majority's customs and moral concepts, as the reason for hostility toward them. Centuries after Hellenistic values had spread throughout and beyond the Mediterranean, the Roman historian Tacitus had this to say:

> Among the Jews, all things are profane that we hold sacred; on the other hand, they regard as permissible what seems to us immoral. . . . The rest of the world they confront with the hatred reserved for enemies. They will not feed or intermarry with gentiles. . . . They have introduced circumcision to show that they are different from others. . . . It is a crime among them to kill any newly born infant.

Philostratus, a Greek writer who lived a century later, offered a similar analysis:

> For the Jews have long been in revolt not only against the Romans, but against humanity; and a race that has made its own life apart and irreconcilable, that cannot share with the rest of mankind in the pleasures of the table, nor join in their libations or prayers or sacrifices, are separated from ourselves by a greater gulf than divides us from Sura or Bactra of the more distant Indies.

Did the Jews actually reject the values that were dominant in the ancient world, or was this simply a fantasy of their enemies? While many of the allegations leveled at Jews were spurious—they did not ritually slaughter non-Jews, as the Greek writer Apion claimed—some were obviously based on true facts. The Jews did oppose intermarriage. They did refuse to sacrifice to foreign gods. And they did emphatically consider killing a newborn infant to be a crime.

Some, perhaps many, individual Jews in those days opted to join the (alluring) Hellenist stream;

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most did not. Even more important, the Jews were the only *people* seriously to challenge the moral system of the Greeks. They were not an "other" in the ancient world; they were *the* "other"—an other, moreover, steadfast in the conviction that Judaism represented not only a different way of life but, in a word, the truth. Jewish tradition claims that Abraham was chosen as the patriarch of what was to become the Jewish nation only after he had smashed the idols in his father's home. His descendants would continue to defy the pagan world around them, championing the idea of the one God and, unlike other peoples of antiquity, refusing to subordinate their beliefs to those of their conquerors.

THE (BY and large correct) perception of the Jews as rejecting the prevailing value system of the ancient world hardly justifies the anti-Semitism directed against them; but it does take anti-Semitism out of the realm of fantasy, turning it into a genuine clash of ideals and of values. With the arrival of Christianity on the world stage, that same clash, based once again on the charge of Jewish rejectionism, would intensify a thousandfold. The refusal of the people of the "old covenant" to accept the new came to be defined as a threat to the very legitimacy of Christianity, and one that required a mobilized response.

Branding the Jews "Christ killers" and "sons of devils," the Church launched a systematic campaign to denigrate Christianity's parent religion and its adherents. Accusations of desecrating the host, ritual murder, and poisoning wells would be added over the centuries, creating an ever larger powder keg of hatred. With the growing power of the Church and the global spread of Christianity, these potentially explosive sentiments were carried to the far corners of the world, bringing anti-Semitism to places where no Jewish foot had ever trod.

According to some Christian thinkers, persecution of the powerless Jews was justified as a kind of divine payback for the Jewish rejection of Jesus. This heavenly stamp of approval would be invoked many times through the centuries, especially by those who had tried and failed to convince the Jews to acknowledge the superior truth of Christianity. The most famous case may be that of Martin Luther: at first extremely friendly toward Jews—as a young man he had complained about their mistreatment by the Church—Luther turned into one of their bitterest enemies as soon as he realized that his efforts to woo them to his new form of Christianity would never bear fruit.

Nor was this pattern unique to the Christian religion. Muhammad, too, had hoped to attract the Jewish communities of Arabia, and to this end he initially incorporated elements of Judaism into his new faith (directing prayer toward Jerusalem, fasting on Yom Kippur, and the like). When, however, the Jews refused to accept his code of law, Muhammad wheeled upon them with a vengeance, cursing them in words strikingly reminiscent of the early Church fathers: "Humiliation and wretchedness were stamped upon them, and they were visited with the wrath of Allah. That was because they disbelieved in Allah's revelation and slew the prophets wrongfully."

IN THESE cases, too, we might ask whether the perception of Jewish rejectionism was accurate. Of course the Jews did not drain the blood of children, poison wells, attempt to mutilate the body of Christ, or commit any of the other wild crimes of which the Church accused them. Moreover, since many teachings of Christianity and Islam stemmed directly from Jewish ones, Jews could hardly be said to have denied them. But if rejecting the Christian or Islamic world meant rejecting the Christian or Islamic creed, then Jews who clung to their own separate faith and way of life were, certainly, rejectionist.

This brings us to an apparent point of difference between pre-modern and modern anti-Semitism. For many Jews over the course of two millennia, there was, in theory at least, a way out of institutionalized discrimination and persecution: the Greco-Roman, Christian, and Muslim worlds were only too happy to embrace converts to their way of life. In the modern era, this choice often proved illusory. Both assimilated and non-assimilated Jews, both religious and secular Jews, were equally victimized by pogroms, persecutions, and genocide. In fact, the terrors directed at the assimilated Jews of Western Europe have led some to conclude that far from ending anti-Semitism, assimilation actually contributed to arousing it.

What accounts for this? In the pre-modern world, Jews and Gentiles were largely in agreement as to what defined Jewish rejectionism, and therefore what would constitute a reprieve from it: it was mostly a matter of beliefs and moral concepts, and of the social behavior that flowed from them. In the modern world, although the question of whether a Jew ate the food or worshiped the God of his neighbors remained relevant, it was less relevant than before. Instead, the modern Jew was seen as being born into a Jewish nation or race whose collective values were deeply embedded in the very fabric of his being. Assimilation, with or without conversion to the majority faith, might succeed in

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masking this bedrock taint; it could not expunge it.

While such views were not entirely absent in earlier periods, the burden of proof faced by the modern Jew to convince others that he could transcend his "Jewishness" was much greater than the one faced by his forebears. Despite the increasing secularism and openness of European society, which should have smoothed the prospects of assimilation, many modern Jews would find it more difficult to become real Frenchmen or true Germans than their ancestors would have found it to become Greeks or Romans, Christians or Muslims.

The novelty of modern anti-Semitism is thus not that the Jews were seen as the enemies of mankind. Indeed, Hitler's observation in *Mein Kampf* that "wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity" sounds no different from the one penned by Philostratus 1,700 years earlier. No, the novelty of modern anti-Semitism is only that it was far more difficult—and sometimes impossible—for the Jew to *stop* being an enemy of mankind.

On closer inspection, then, modern anti-Semitism begins to look quite continuous with pre-modern anti-Semitism, only worse. Modern Jews may not have believed they were rejecting the prevailing order around them, but that did not necessarily mean their enemies agreed with them. When it came to the Jews, indeed, European nationalism of the blood-and-soil variety only added another and even more murderous layer of hatred to the foundation built by age-old religious prejudice. Just as in the ancient world, the Jews in the modern world remained *the* other—inveterate rejectionists, no matter how separate, no matter how assimilated.

Was there any kernel of factual truth to *this* charge? It is demeaning to have to point out that, wherever and whenever they were given the chance, most modern Jews strove to become model citizens and showed, if anything, an exemplary talent for acculturation; the idea that by virtue of their birth, race, or religion they were implacable enemies of the state or nation was preposterous. So, too, with other modern libels directed against the Jews, which displayed about as much or as little truth content as ancient ones. The Jews did not and do not control the banks. They did not and do not control the media of communication. They did not and do not control governments. And they are not plotting to take over anything.

What some of them have indeed done, in various places and under specific circumstances, is to demonstrate—with an ardor and tenacity redolent perhaps of their long national experience—an attachment to great causes of one stripe or another, including, at times, the cause of their own people. This has had the effect (not everywhere, of course, but notably in highly stratified and/or intolerant societies) of putting them in a visibly adversary position to prevailing values or ideologies, and thereby awakening the never dormant dragon of anti-Semitism. Particularly instructive in this regard is the case of Soviet Jewry.

What makes the Soviet case instructive is, in no small measure, the fact that the professed purpose of Communism was to *abolish* all nations, peoples, and religions—those great engines of exclusion—on the road to the creation of a new world and a new man. As is well known, quite a few Jews, hoping to emancipate humanity and to "normalize" their own condition in the process, hitched their fates to this ideology and to the movements associated with it. After the Bolshevik revolution, these Jews proved to be among the most devoted servants of the Soviet regime.

Once again, however, the perception of ineradicable Jewish otherness proved as lethal as any reality. In the eyes of Stalin and his henchmen, the Jews, starting with the loyal Communists among them, were always suspect—"ideological immigrants," in the telling phrase. But the animosity went beyond Jewish Communists. The Soviet regime declared war on the over 100 nationalities and religions under its boot; whole peoples were deported, entire classes destroyed, millions starved to death, and tens of millions killed. Everybody suffered, not only Jews. But, decades later, long after Stalin's repression had given way to Khrushchev's "thaw," only one national language, Hebrew, was still banned in the Soviet Union; only one group, the Jews, was not permitted to establish schools for its children; only in the case of one group, the Jews, did the term "fifth line," referring to the space reserved for nationality on a Soviet citizen's identification papers, become a code for licensed discrimination.

Clearly, then, Jews were suspect in the Soviet Union as were no other group. Try as they might to conform, it turned out that joining the mainstream of humanity through the medium of the great socialist cause in the East was no easier than joining the nation-state in the West. But that is not the whole story, either. To scant the rest of it is not only to do an injustice to Soviet Jews as historical actors in their own right but to miss something essential

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about anti-Semitism, which, even as it operates in accordance with its own twisted definitions and its own mad logic, proceeds almost always by reference to some genuine quality in its chosen victims.

As it happens, although Jews were disproportionately represented in the ranks of the early Bolsheviks, the majority of Russian Jews were far from being Bolsheviks, or even Bolshevik sympathizers. More importantly, Jews would also, in time, come to play a disproportionate role in Communism's demise. In the middle of the 1960's, by which time their overall share of the country's population had dwindled dramatically, Soviet Jews made up a significant element in the "democratic opposition." A visitor to the Gulag in those years would have discovered that Jews were also prominent among political dissidents and those convicted of so-called "economic crimes." Even more revealing, in the 1970's the Jews were the first to challenge the Soviet regime as a national group, and to do so publicly, en masse, with tens of thousands openly demanding to leave the totalitarian state.

To that degree, then, the claim of Soviet anti-Semites that "Jewish thoughts" and "Jewish values" were in opposition to prevailing norms was not entirely unfounded. And, to that degree, Soviet anti-Semitism partook of the essential characteristic of all anti-Semitism. This hardly makes its expression any the less monstrous; it merely, once again, takes it out of the realm of fantasy.

AND SO we arrive back at today, and at the hatred that takes as its focus the state of Israel. That state—the world's Jew—has the distinction of challenging two separate political/moral orders simultaneously: the order of the Arab and Muslim Middle East, and the order that prevails in Western Europe. The Middle Eastern case is the easier to grasp; the Western European one may be the more ominous.

The values ascendant in today's Middle East are shaped by two forces: Islamic fundamentalism and state authoritarianism. In the eyes of the former, any non-Muslim sovereign power in the region—for that matter, any secular Muslim power—is anathema. Particularly galling is Jewish sovereignty in an area delineated as *dar al-Islam*, the realm where Islam is destined to enjoy exclusive dominance. Such a violation cannot be compromised with; nothing will suffice but its extirpation.

In the eyes of the secular Arab regimes, the Jews of Israel are similarly an affront, but not so much on theological grounds as on account of the society they have built: free, productive, democratic, a living rebuke to the corrupt, autocratic regimes surrounding it. In short, the Jewish state is the ultimate freedom fighter—an embodiment of the subversive liberties that threaten Islamic civilization and autocratic Arab rule alike. It is for this reason that, in the state-controlled Arab media as in the mosques, Jews have been turned into a symbol of all that is menacing in the democratic, materialist West as a whole, and are confidently reputed to be the insidious force manipulating the United States into a confrontation with Islam.

The particular dynamic of anti-Semitism in the Middle East orbit today may help explain why—unlike, as we shall see, in Europe—there was no drop in the level of anti-Jewish incitement in the region after the inception of the Oslo peace process. Quite the contrary. And the reason is plain: to the degree that Oslo were to have succeeded in bringing about a real reconciliation with Israel or in facilitating the spread of political freedom, to that degree it would have frustrated the overarching aim of eradicating the Jewish "evil" from the heart of the Middle East and/or preserving the autocratic power of the Arab regimes.

And so, while in the 1990's the democratic world, including the democratic society of Israel, was (deludedly, as it turned out) celebrating the promise of a new dawn in the Middle East, the schools in Gaza, the textbooks in Ramallah, the newspapers in Egypt, and the television channels in Saudi Arabia were projecting a truer picture of the state of feeling in the Arab world. It should come as no surprise that, in Egypt, pirated copies of Shimon Peres's *A New Middle East*, a book heralding a messianic era of free markets and free ideas, were printed with an introduction in Arabic claiming that what this bible of Middle East peacemaking proved was the veracity of everything written in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* about a Jewish plot to rule the world.

As for Western Europe, there the reputation of Israel and of the Jews has undergone a number of ups and downs over the decades. Before 1967, the shadow of the Holocaust and the perception of Israel as a small state struggling for its existence in the face of Arab aggression combined to ensure, if not the favor of the European political classes, at least a certain dispensation from harsh criticism. But all this changed in June 1967, when the truncated Jewish state achieved a seemingly miraculous victory against its massed Arab enemies in the Six-Day war, and the erstwhile victim was overnight transformed into an aggressor. A possibly apocryphal story about Jean-Paul Sartre encapsulates

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the shift in the European mood. Before the war, as Israel lay diplomatically isolated and Arab leaders were already trumpeting its certain demise, the famous French philosopher signed a statement in support of the Jewish state. After the war, he reproached the man who had solicited his signature: "But you assured me they would lose."

Decades before "occupation" became a household word, the mood in European chancelleries and on the Left turned decidedly hostile. There were, to be sure, venal interests at stake, from the perceived need to curry favor with the oil-producing nations of the Arab world to, in later years, the perceived need to pander to the growing Muslim populations in Western Europe itself. But other currents were also at work, as anti-Western, anti-"imperialist," pacifist, and pro-liberationist sentiments, fanned and often subsidized by the USSR, took over the advanced political culture both of Europe and of international diplomacy. Behind the new hostility to Israel lay the new ideological orthodoxy, according to whose categories the Jewish state had emerged on the world scene as a certified "colonial" and "imperialist" power, a "hegemon," and an "oppressor."

Before 1967, anti-Zionist resolutions sponsored by the Arabs and their Soviet patrons in the United Nations garnered little or no support among the democracies. After 1967, more and more Western countries joined the chorus of castigation. By 1974, Yasir Arafat, whose organization openly embraced both terrorism and the destruction of a UN member state, was invited to address the General Assembly. The next year, that same body passed the infamous "Zionism-is-racism" resolution. In 1981, Israel's strike against Iraq's nuclear reactor was condemned by the entire world, including the United States.

Then, in the 1990's, things began to change again. Despite the constant flow of biased UN resolutions, despite the continuing double standard, there were a number of positive developments as well: the Zionism-is-racism resolution was repealed, and over 65 member states either established or renewed diplomatic relations with Israel.

What had happened? Had Arab oil dried up? Had Muslims suddenly become a less potent political force on the European continent? Hardly. What changed was that, at Madrid and then at Oslo, Israel had agreed, first reluctantly and later with self-induced optimism, to conform to the ascendant ethos of international politics. Extending its hand to a terrorist organization still committed to its destruction, Israel agreed to the establishment of a dictatorial and repressive regime on its very doorstep, sustaining its commitment to the so-called peace process no matter how many innocent Jews were killed and wounded in its fraudulent name.

The rewards for thus conforming to the template of the world's moralizers, cosmetic and temporary though they proved to be, flowed predictably not just to Israel but to the Jewish people as a whole. Sure enough, worldwide indices of anti-Semitism in the 1990's dropped to their lowest point since the Holocaust. As the world's Jews benefited from the increasing tolerance extended to the world's Jew, Western organizations devoted to fighting the anti-Semitic scourge began cautiously to declare victory and to refocus their efforts on other parts of the Jewish communal agenda.

But of course it would not last. In the summer of 2000, at Camp David, Ehud Barak offered the Palestinians nearly everything their leadership was thought to be demanding. The offer was summarily rejected, Arafat started his "uprising," Israel undertook to defend itself—and Europe ceased to applaud. For many Jews at the time, this seemed utterly incomprehensible: had not Israel taken every last step for peace? But it was all too comprehensible. Europe was staying true to form; it was the world's Jew, by refusing to accept its share of blame for the "cycle of violence," that was out of line. And so were the world's Jews, who by definition, and whether they supported Israel or not, came rapidly to be associated with the Jewish state in its effrontery.

To Americans, the process I have been describing may sound eerily familiar. It should: Americans, too, have had numerous opportunities to see their nation in the dock of world opinion over recent years for the crime of rejecting the values of the so-called international community, and never more so than during the widespread hysteria that greeted President Bush's announced plan to dismantle the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein. In dozens of countries, protesters streamed into the streets to voice their fury at this refusal of the United States to conform to what "everybody" knew to be required of it. To judge from the placards on display at these rallies, President Bush, the leader of the free world, was a worse enemy of mankind than the butcher of Baghdad.

At first glance, this too must have seemed incomprehensible. Saddam Hussein was one of the world's most brutal dictators, a man who had gassed his own citizens, invaded his neighbors, defied Security Council resolutions, and was widely believed to possess weapons of mass destruction. But no matter: the protests were less about Iraqi

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virtue than about American vice, and the grievances aired by the assorted anti-capitalists, anti-globalists, radical environmentalists, self-styled anti-imperialists, and many others who assembled to decry the war had little to do with the possible drawbacks of a military operation in Iraq. They had to do, rather, with a genuine clash of values.

Insofar as the clash is between the United States and Europe—there is a large "European" body of opinion within the United States as well—it has been well diagnosed by Robert Kagan in his best-selling book, *Of Paradise and Power*. For our purposes, it is sufficient to remark on how quickly the initial "why-do-they-hate-us" debate in the wake of September 11, focusing on anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world, came to be overtaken by a "why-do-they-hate-us" debate centered on anti-American sentiment in "Old Europe." Generally, the two hatreds have been seen to emanate from divergent impulses, in the one case a perception of the threat posed by Western freedoms to Islamic civilization, in the other a perception of the threat posed by a self-confident and powerful America to the postmodern European idea of a world regulated not by force but by reason, compromise, and nonjudgmentalism. In today's Europe—professedly pacifist, postnationalist, anti-hegemonic—an expression like "axis of evil" wins few friends, and the idea of actually confronting the axis of evil still fewer.

Despite the differences between them, however, anti-Americanism in the Islamic world and anti-Americanism in Europe are in fact linked, and both bear an uncanny resemblance to anti-Semitism. It is, after all, with some reason that the United States is loathed and feared by the despots and fundamentalists of the Islamic world as well as by many Europeans. Like Israel, but in a much more powerful way, America embodies a different—a nonconforming—idea of the good, and refuses to abandon its moral clarity about the objective worth of that idea or of the free habits and institutions to which it has given birth. To the contrary, in undertaking their war against the evil of terrorism, the American people have demonstrated their determination not only to fight to preserve the blessings of liberty for themselves and their posterity, but to carry them to regions of the world that have proved most resistant to their benign influence.

IN THIS, positive sense as well, Israel and the Jewish people share something essential with the United States. The Jews, after all, have long held that they were chosen to play a special role in history, to be what their prophets called "a light unto the nations." What precisely is meant by that phrase has always been a matter of debate, and I would be the last to deny the mischief that has sometimes been done, including to the best interests of the Jews, by some who have raised it as their banner. Nevertheless, over four millennia, the universal vision and moral precepts of the Jews have not only worked to secure the survival of the Jewish people themselves but have constituted a powerful force for good in the world, inspiring myriads to fight for the right even as in others they have aroused rivalry, enmity, and unappeasable resentment.

It is similar with the United States—a nation that has long regarded itself as entrusted with a mission to be what John Winthrop in the 17th century called a "city on a hill" and Ronald Reagan in the 20th parsed as a "shining city on a hill." What precisely is meant by *that* phrase is likewise a matter of debate, but Americans who see their country in such terms certainly regard the advance of American values as central to American purpose. And, though the United States is still a very young nation, there can be no disputing that those values have likewise constituted an immense force for good in the world—even as they have earned America the enmity and resentment of many.

In resolving to face down enmity and hatred, an important source of strength is the lesson to be gained from contemplating the example of others. From Socrates to Churchill to Sakharov, there have been individuals whose voices and whose personal heroism have reinforced in others the resolve to stand firm for the good. But history has also been generous enough to offer, in the Jews, the example of an ancient people fired by the message of human freedom under God and, in the Americans, the example of a modern people who over the past century alone, acting in fidelity with their inmost beliefs, have confronted and defeated the greatest tyrannies ever known to man.

Fortunately for America, and fortunately for the world, the United States has been blessed by providence with the power to match its ideals. The Jewish state, by contrast, is a tiny island in an exceedingly dangerous sea, and its citizens will need every particle of strength they can muster for the trials ahead. It is their own people's astounding perseverance, despite centuries of suffering at the hands of faiths, ideologies, peoples, and individuals who have hated them and set out to do them in, that inspires one with confidence that the Jews will once again outlast their enemies.

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Gay Marriage—and Marriage

Sam Schulman

THE FEELING seems to be growing that gay marriage is inevitably coming our way in the U.S., perhaps through a combination of judicial fiat and legislation in individual states. Growing, too, is the sense of a shift in the climate of opinion. The American public seems to be in the process of changing its mind—not actually in favor of gay marriage, but toward a position of slightly revolted tolerance for the idea. Survey results suggest that people have forgotten why they were so opposed to the notion even as recently as a few years ago.

It is curious that this has happened so quickly. With honorable exceptions, most of those who are passionately on the side of the traditional understanding of marriage appear to be at a loss for words to justify their passion; as for the rest, many seem to wish gay marriage had never been proposed in the first place, but also to have resigned themselves to whatever happens. In this respect, the gay-marriage debate is very different from the abortion debate, in which few with an opinion on either side have been so disengaged.

I think I understand why this is the case: as someone passionately and instinctively opposed to the idea of homosexual marriage, I have found myself disappointed by the arguments I have seen advanced against it. The strongest of these arguments predict measurable harm to the family and to our arrangements for the upbringing and well-being of children. I do not doubt the accuracy of those arguments.* But they do not seem to get at the heart of the matter.

To me, what is at stake in this debate is not only the potential unhappiness of children, grave as that is; it is our ability to maintain the most basic components of our humanity. I believe, in fact, that we are at an "Antigone moment." Some of our fellow citizens wish to impose a radically new understanding upon laws and institutions that are both very old and fundamental to our organization as individuals and as a society. As Antigone said to Creon, we are being asked to tamper with "unwritten and unfailing laws, not of now, nor of yesterday; they always live, and no one knows their origin in time." I suspect, moreover, that everyone knows this is the case, and that, paradoxically, this very awareness of just how much is at stake is what may have induced, in defenders of those same "unwritten and unfailing laws," a kind of paralysis.

Admittedly, it is very difficult to defend that which is both ancient and "unwritten"—the arguments do not resolve themselves into a neat parade of documentary evidence, research results, or citations from the legal literature. Admittedly, too, proponents of this radical new understanding have been uncommonly effective in presenting their

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* For a summary of the scant research on children raised in homes with same-sex parents as of six or seven years ago, see James Q. Wilson, "Against Homosexual Marriage," in COMMENTARY, March 1996.

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program as something that is not radical at all but as requiring merely a slight and painless adjustment in our customary arrangements. Finally, we have all learned to practice a certain deference to the pleas of minorities with a grievance, and in recent years no group has benefited more from this society-wide dispensation than homosexuals. Nevertheless, in the somewhat fragmentary notes that follow, I hope to re-articulate what I am persuaded everyone knows to be the case about marriage, and perhaps thereby encourage others with stronger arguments than mine to help break the general paralysis.

LET US begin by admiring the case *for* gay marriage. Unlike the case for completely unrestricted abortion, which has come to be something of an embarrassment even to those who advance it, the case for gay marriage enjoys the decided advantage of appealing to our better moral natures as well as to our reason. It deploys two arguments. The first centers on principles of justice and fairness and may be thought of as the civil-rights argument. The second is at once more personal and more utilitarian, emphasizing the degradation and unhappiness attendant upon the denial of gay marriage and, conversely, the human and social happiness that will flow from its legal establishment.

Both arguments have been set forth most persuasively by two gifted writers, Bruce Bawer and Andrew Sullivan, each of whom describes himself as a social conservative. In their separate ways, they have been campaigning for gay marriage for over a decade. Bawer's take on the subject is succinctly summarized in his 1993 book, *A Place at the Table*; Sullivan has held forth on the desirability of legalizing gay marriage in numerous articles, on his website (andrewsullivan.com), and in an influential book, *Virtually Normal* (1995).

The civil-rights argument goes like this. Marriage is a legal state conferring real, tangible benefits on those who participate in it: specifically, tax breaks as well as other advantages when it comes to inheritance, property ownership, and employment benefits. But family law, since it limits marriage to heterosexual couples over the age of consent, clearly discriminates against a segment of the population. It is thus a matter of simple justice that, in Sullivan's words, "all public (as opposed to private) discrimination against homosexuals be ended and that every right and responsibility that heterosexuals enjoy as public citizens be extended to those who grow up and find themselves emotionally different." Not to grant such rights, Sullivan maintains, is to impose on homosexuals a civil deprivation akin to that suffered by black Americans under Jim Crow.

The utilitarian argument is more subtle; just as the rights argument seems aimed mainly at liberals, this one seems mostly to have in mind the concerns of conservatives. In light of the disruptive, anarchic, violence-prone behavior of many homosexuals (the argument runs), why should we *not* encourage the formation of stable, long-term, monogamous relationships that will redound to the health of society as a whole? In the apt words of a letter-writer in COMMENTARY in 1996:

> [H]omosexual marriage . . . preserves and promotes a set of moral values that are essential to civilized society. Like heterosexual marriage, it sanctions loyalty, unselfishness, and sexual fidelity; it rejects the promiscuous, the self-serving, the transitory relationship. Given the choice between building family units and preventing them, any conservative should favor the former.

Bawer, for his part, has come close to saying that the inability of many male homosexuals to remain faithful in long-term relationships is a *consequence* of the lack of marriage rights—a burning sign of the more general stigma under which gays labor in our society and which can be redressed by changes in law. As it happens, though, this particular line of argument is already somewhat out of date and is gradually being phased out of the discussion. The toleration of gay styles of life has come about on its own in American society, without the help of legal sanctions, and protecting gay couples from the contempt of bigots is not the emergency Bawer has depicted. Quite the contrary: with increasing numbers of gay partners committing themselves to each other for life, in full and approving view of their families and friends, advocates of gay marriage need no longer call upon the law to light (or force) the way; they need only ask it to ratify a trend.

IN BRIEF, legalizing gay marriage would, in Andrew Sullivan's summary formulation,

> offer homosexuals the same deal society now offers heterosexuals: general social approval and specific legal advantages in exchange for a deeper and harder-to-extract-yourself-from commitment to another human being. Like straight marriage, it would foster social cohesion, emotional security, and economic prudence.

The case is elegant, and it is compelling. But it is not unanswerable. And answers have indeed been

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forthcoming, even if, as I indicated at the outset, many of them have tended to be couched somewhat defensively. Thus, rather than repudiating the very idea of an abstract "right" to marry, many upholders of the traditional definition of marriage tacitly concede such a right, only going on to suggest that denying it to a minority amounts to a lesser hurt than conferring it would impose on the majority, and especially on children, the weakest members of our society.

Others, to be sure, have attacked the Bawer/Sullivan line more forthrightly. In a September 2000 article in COMMENTARY, "What Is Wrong with Gay Marriage," Stanley Kurtz challenged the central contention that marriage would do for gay men what it does for straights—i.e., "domesticate" their natural male impulse to promiscuity. Citing a number of academic "queer theorists" and radical gays, Kurtz wrote:

> In contrast to moderates and "conservatives" like Andrew Sullivan, who consistently play down [the] difference [between gays and straights] in order to promote their vision of gays as monogamists-in-the-making, radical gays have argued—more knowledgeably, more powerfully, and more vocally than any opponent of same-sex marriage would dare to do—that homosexuality, and particularly male homosexuality, is by its very nature incompatible with the norms of traditional monogamous marriage.

True, Kurtz went on, such radical gays nevertheless support same-sex marriage. But what motivates them is the hope of "eventually undoing the institution [of marriage] altogether," by delegitimizing age-old understandings of the family and thus (in the words of one such radical) "striking at the heart of the organization of Western culture and societies."

Nor are radical gays the only ones to entertain such destructive ambitions. Queuing up behind them, Kurtz warned, are the proponents of polygamy, polyandry, and polyamorism, all ready to argue that their threesomes, foursomes, and other "nontraditional" arrangements are entitled to the same rights as everyone else's. In a recent piece in the *Weekly Standard*, Kurtz has written that the "bottom" of this particular slippery slope is "visible from where we stand":

> Advocacy of legalized polygamy is growing. A network of grass-roots organizations seeking legal recognition for group marriage already exists. The cause of legalized group marriage is championed by a powerful faction of family-law specialists. Influential legal bodies in both the United States and Canada have presented radical programs of marital reform, . . . [even] the abolition of marriage. The ideas behind this movement have already achieved surprising influence with a prominent American politician [Al Gore].

Like other critics of same-sex marriage, Kurtz has himself been vigorously criticized, especially by Sullivan. But he is almost certainly correct as to political and legal realities. If we grant rights to one group because they have demanded it—which is, practically, how legalized gay marriage will come to pass—we will find it exceedingly awkward to deny similar rights to others ready with their own dossiers of "victimization." In time, restricting marriage rights to couples, whether straight or gay, can be made to seem no less arbitrary than the practice of restricting marriage rights to one man and one woman. Ultimately, the same must go for incestuous relationships between consenting adults—a theme to which I will return.

A DIFFERENT defense of heterosexual marriage has proceeded by circling the wagons around the institution itself. According to this school of thought, ably represented by the columnist Maggie Gallagher, the essential purpose of that institution is to create stable families:

> Most men and women are powerfully drawn to perform a sexual act that can and does generate life. Marriage is our attempt to reconcile and harmonize the erotic, social, sexual, and financial needs of men and women with the needs of their partner and their children.

Even childless marriages protect this purpose, writes Gallagher, by ensuring that, as long as the marriage exists, neither the childless husband nor the childless wife is likely to father or mother children outside of wedlock.

Gallagher is especially strong on the larger, social meaning of heterosexual marriage, which she calls "inherently normative":

> The laws of marriage do not create marriage, but in societies ruled by law they help trace the boundaries and sustain the public meanings of marriage. . . . Without this shared, public aspect, perpetuated generation after generation, marriage becomes what its critics say it is: a mere contract, a vessel with no particular content, one of a menu of sexual lifestyles, of no fundamental importance to anyone outside a given relationship.

Human relationships are by nature difficult enough, Gallagher reminds us, which is why com-

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munities must do all they can to strengthen and not to weaken those institutions that keep us up to a mark we may not be able to achieve through our own efforts. The consequences of not doing so will be an intensification of all the other woes of which we have so far had only a taste in our society and which are reflected in the galloping statistics of illegitimacy, cohabitation, divorce, and fatherlessness. For Gallagher, the modest request of gay-marriage advocates for "a place at the table" is thus profoundly selfish as well as utterly destructive—for gay marriage "would require society at large to gut marriage of its central presumptions about family in order to accommodate a few adults' desires."

JAMES Q. WILSON, Maggie Gallagher, Stanley Kurtz, and others—including William J. Bennett in *The Broken Hearth* (2001)—are right to point to the deleterious private and public consequences of instituting gay marriage. Why, then, do their arguments fail to satisfy completely? Partly, no doubt, it is because the damage they describe is largely prospective and to that degree hypothetical; partly, as I remarked early on, the defensive tone that invariably enters into these polemics may rob them of the force they would otherwise have. I hardly mean to deprecate that tone: anyone with homosexual friends or relatives, especially those participating in longstanding romantic relationships, must feel abashed to find himself saying, in effect, "You gentlemen, you ladies, are at one and the same time a fine example of fidelity and mutual attachment—and the thin edge of the wedge." Nevertheless, in demanding the right to marry, that is exactly what they are.

To grasp what is at the other edge of that wedge—that is, what stands to be undone by gay marriage—we have to distinguish marriage itself from a variety of other goods and values with which it is regularly associated by its defenders and its aspirants alike. Those values—love and monogamous sex and establishing a home, fidelity, childbearing and childrearing, stability, inheritance, tax breaks, and all the rest—are not the same as marriage. True, a good marriage generally contains them, a bad marriage is generally deficient in them, and in law, religion, and custom, even under the strictest of moral regimes, their absence can be grounds for ending the union. But the *essence* of marriage resides elsewhere, and those who seek to arrange a kind of marriage for the inherently unmarriageable are looking for those things in the wrong place.

The largest fallacy of all arises from the emphasis on romantic love. In a book published last year, Tipper and Al Gore defined a family as those who are "joined at the heart"—"getting beyond words, legal formalities, and even blood ties." The distinction the Gores draw in this sentimental and offhand way is crucial, but they utterly misconstrue it. Hearts can indeed love, and stop loving. But what exactly does this have to do with marriage, which can follow, precede, or remain wholly independent of that condition?

It is a truism that many married people feel little sexual or romantic attraction to each other—perhaps because they have been married too long, or perhaps, as some men have always claimed, because the death of sexual desire is coincident with the wedding ceremony. ("All comedies are ended by a marriage," Byron wittily and sadly remarked.) Many people—in ages past, certainly most people—have married for reasons other than sexual or romantic attraction. So what? I could marry a woman I did not love, a woman I did not feel sexually attracted to or want to sleep with, and our marriage would still be a marriage, not just legally but in its *essence*.

The truth is banal, circular, but finally unavoidable: by definition, the essence of marriage is to sanction and solemnize that connection of opposites which alone creates new life. (Whether or not a given married couple does in fact create new life is immaterial.) Men and women *can* marry only because they belong to different, opposite, sexes. In marriage, they surrender those separate and different sexual allegiances, coming together to form a new entity. Their union is not a formalizing of romantic love but represents a certain idea—a construction, an abstract thought—about how best to formalize the human condition. This thought, embodied in a promise or a contract, is what holds marriage together, and the creation of this idea of marriage marks a key moment in the history of human development, a triumph over the alternative idea, which is concubinage.

LET ME try to be more precise. Marriage can only concern my connection to a woman (and not to a man) because, as my reference to concubinage suggests, marriage is an institution that is built around female sexuality and female procreativity. (The very word "marriage" comes from the Latin word for mother, *mater*.) It exists for the gathering-in of a woman's sexuality under the protective net of the human or divine order, or both. This was so in the past and it is so even now, in our supposedly liberated times, when a woman who is in a sexual relationship without being married is, and is perceived to be, in a different state

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of being (not just a different legal state) from a woman who is married.

Circumstances have, admittedly, changed. Thanks to contraception, the decision to marry no longer precedes sexual intercourse as commonly as it did 50 years ago, when, for most people, a fully sexual relationship could begin only with marriage (and, when, as my mother constantly reminds me, one married *for* sex). Now the decision can come later; but come it almost certainly must. Even with contraception, even with feminism and women's liberation, the feeling would appear to be nearly as strong as ever that, for a woman, a sexual relationship must either end in marriage, or end.

This is surely understandable, for marriage *benefits* women, again not just in law but essentially. A woman can control who is the father of her children only insofar as there is a civil and private order that protects her from rape; marriage is the bulwark of that order. The 1960's feminists had the right idea: the essential thing for a woman is to control her own body. But they were wrong that this is what abortion is for; it is, rather, what marriage is for. It is humanity's way of enabling a woman to control her own body and to know (if she cares to) who is the father of her children.

Yes, marriage tends to regulate or channel the sexual appetite of men, and this is undoubtedly a good thing for women. But it is not the ultimate good. A husband, no matter how unfaithful, cannot introduce a child who is not his wife's own into a marriage without her knowledge; she alone has the power to do such a thing. For a woman, the fundamental advantage of marriage is thus not to regulate her husband but to empower herself—to regulate who has access to her person, and to marshal the resources of her husband and of the wider community to help her raise her children.

Every human relationship can be described as an enslavement, but for women the alternative to marriage is a much worse enslavement—which is why marriage, for women, is often associated as much with sexual freedom as with sexual constraint. In the traditional Roman Catholic cultures of the Mediterranean and South America, where virginity is fiercely protected and adolescent girls are hardly permitted to "date," marriage gives a woman the double luxury of controlling her sexuality and, if she wishes, extending it.

For men, by contrast, the same phenomenon—needing to be married in order to feel safe and free in a sexual relationship—simply does not exist. Men may wish to marry, but for more particular reasons: because they want to have children, or because they want to make a woman they love happy, or because they fear they will otherwise lose the woman they love. But it is rare for a man to feel essentially incomplete, or unprotected, in a sexual relationship that has not been solemnized by marriage. In fact, a man desperate to marry is often considered to have something wrong with him—to be unusually controlling or needy.

Because marriage is an arrangement built around female sexuality, because the institution has to do with women far more than it has to do with men, women will be the victims of its destruction. Those analysts who have focused on how children will suffer from the legalization of gay marriage are undoubtedly correct—but this will not be the first time that social developments perceived as advances for one group or another have harmed children. After all, the two most important (if effortless) achievements of the women's movement of the late 1960's were the right to abort and the right—in some social classes, the commandment—to join the professional workforce, both manifestly harmful to the interests of children.

But with the success of the gay-liberation movement, it is women themselves, all women, who will be hurt. The reason is that gay marriage takes something that belongs essentially to women, is crucial to their very freedom, and empties it of meaning.

WHY SHOULD I not be able to marry a man? The question addresses a class of human phenomena that can be described in sentences but nonetheless cannot be. However much I might wish to, I cannot be a father to a pebble—I cannot be a brother to a puppy—I cannot make my horse my consul. Just so, I cannot, and should not be able to, marry a man. If I want to be a brother to a puppy, are you abridging my rights by not permitting it? I may say what I please; saying it does not mean that it can be.

In a gay marriage, one of two men must play the woman, or one of two women must play the man. "Play" here means travesty—burlesque. Not that their love is a travesty; but their participation in a ceremony that apes the marriage bond, with all that goes into it, is a travesty. Their taking-over of the form of this crucial and fragile connection of opposites is a travesty of marriage's purpose of protecting, actually and symbolically, the woman who enters into marriage with a man. To burlesque that purpose weakens those protections, and is essentially and profoundly anti-female.

Radical feminists were right, to an extent, in insisting that men's and women's sexuality is so different as to be inimical. Catharine MacKinnon has proclaimed that in a "patriarchal" society, all sexual intercourse is rape. Repellent as her view is, it is

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formed around a kernel of truth. There is something inherently violative about sexual intercourse—and there is something dangerous about being a woman in a sexual relationship with a man to whom she is not yet married. Among the now-aging feminists of my generation, no less than among their mothers, such a woman is commonly thought to be a *victim*.

Marriage is a sign that the ever-so-slight violation that is involved in a heterosexual relationship has been sanctioned by some recognized authority. That sanction is also what makes divorce a scandal—for divorce cannot truly undo the sanction of sexual intercourse, which is to say the sanction to create life, with one's original partner. Even in the Jewish tradition, which regards marriage (but not love) in a completely unsacralized way, divorce, though perfectly legal, does not erase the ontological status of the earlier marriage. (The Talmud records that God weeps when a man puts aside his first wife.) This sanction does not exist for homosexual couples. They are not opposites; they are the same. They live in a world of innocence, and neither their union nor their disunion partakes of the act of creation.

This brings us back to the incest ban, with which marriage is intimately and intricately connected. Indeed, marriage exists for the same reason that incest must not: because in our darker, inhuman moments we are driven toward that which *is* the same as ourselves and away from that which is fundamentally different from ourselves. Therefore we are enjoined from committing incest, negatively, and commanded to join with our opposite, positively—so that humanity may endure.

Homosexuals are, of course, free to avoid the latter commandment—and those who choose to do so are assuredly capable of leading rich and satisfying lives. The same goes for all those non-homosexuals who have decided or been advised not to marry in certain circumstances—for example, if they wish to be members of celibate religious communities, or ascetic soldiers in a cause, or geniuses (as Cyril Connolly warned, "there is no more somber enemy of good art than the pram in the hall"). Men and women alike now spend more time as sexually mature adults outside of marriage than ever before, and some number of them live together in unreal or mock marriages of one kind or another. The social status of homosexuals is no better and no worse than that of anyone else who lives in an unmarried condition.

WHAT OF simple compassion? What do we owe to our fellow-beings who wish, as they might put it, to achieve a happiness they see we are entitled to but which we deny to them? From those of us who oppose gay marriage, Andrew Sullivan demands *some* "reference to gay people's lives or relationships or needs." But the truth is that many people have many needs that are not provided for by law, by government, or by society at large—and for good reason.

Insofar as I care for my homosexual friend *as* a friend, I am required to say to him that, if a lifelong monogamous relationship is what you want, I wish you that felicity, just as I hope you would wish me the same. But insofar as our lives as citizens are concerned, or even as human beings, your monogamy and the durability of your relationship are, to be blunt about it, matters of complete indifference. They are of as little concern to our collective life as if you were to smoke cigars or build model railroads in your basement or hang-glide, and of less concern to society than the safety of your property when you leave your house or your right not to be overcharged by the phone company.

That is not because you are gay. It is because, in choosing to conduct your life as you have every right to do, you have stepped out of the area of shared social concern—in the same sense as has anyone, of whatever sexuality, who chooses not to marry. There are millions of lonely people, of whom it is safe to say that the majority are in heterosexual marriages. But marriage, though it may help meet the needs of the lonely, does not exist because it is an answer to those needs; it is an arrangement that has to do with empowering women to avoid even greater unhappiness, and with sustaining the future history of the species.

Marriage, to say it for the last time, is what connects us with our nature and with our animal origins, with how all of us, heterosexual and homosexual alike, came to be. It exists not because of custom, or because of a conspiracy (whether patriarchal or matriarchal), but because, through marriage, the *world* exists. Marriage is how we are connected backward in time, through the generations, to our Creator (or, if you insist, to the primal soup), and forward to the future beyond the scope of our own lifespan. It is, to say the least, bigger than two hearts beating as one.

Severing this connection by defining it out of existence—cutting it down to size, transforming it into a mere contract between chums—sunders the natural laws that prevent concubinage and incest. Unless we resist, we will find ourselves entering on the path to the abolition of the human. The gods move very fast when they bring ruin on misguided men.

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Kissinger & Chile: The Myth That Will Not Die

Mark Falcoff

THE 30TH anniversary of the coup d'etat that deposed Chile's Marxist president Salvador Allende has come and gone, but not without a burst of accusations of American complicity with—if not responsibility for—that event. Even before the commemorations had gotten under way, Secretary of State Colin Powell took it upon himself to apologize for the U.S. role in Chile, though in terms so vague as to leave many wondering exactly what he was referring to.

The fact that the coup itself took place on the very same date—September 11—that the World Trade Center was destroyed by a sensational terrorist attack in 2001 was a coincidence too fraught to be overlooked. In an editorial titled "The Other September 11," the *New York Times*, with characteristic condescension, reminded its readers that "our nation's hands have not always been clean" and managed to suggest a smoking gun ("the United States . . . laid the groundwork for [the coup] and supported the plotters") without actually producing one. The foreign press was more categorical. In *Le Monde*, the flagship daily of anti-Americans worldwide, a front-page cartoon on September 11 depicted a plane about to hit the World Trade Center. But the roles of villain and victim had been grotesquely altered: the twin towers were labeled "Chile," the plane "USA."

The name invariably linked to our Chilean involvement is that of Henry Kissinger, today the leading survivor of the Nixon administration and at the time the evident architect of much of its foreign policy, first as National Security Adviser and then as Secretary of State. The case against him has been before the public for several years now, most notably in an article by Christopher Hitchens in *Harper's* that was subsequently reproduced in Hitchens's book *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* and then repeated with a wealth of lurid detail in a BBC "documentary" in which Hitchens appears as prosecutor-in-chief. In addition to his supposed role as the intellectual author of the coup, Kissinger has been accused in both film and book of responsibility for the murder of General René Schneider, commander-in-chief of the Chilean army—that is, of homicide. The sons of the late general, egged on by political sympathizers in Europe and the United States, have even filed suit against Kissinger in hopes of recovering substantial damages for their father's death.

Chilean politics past or present is not a particular specialty of Americans, even Americans normally well informed about world affairs. What people know—or think they know—about that country is often a digest of newspaper headlines and of vague allegations, rather than substantiated facts. But neither is Chilean politics a specialty of

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Christopher Hitchens, the *New York Times*, or *Le Monde*. As we shall see, their interests would appear to lie largely elsewhere.

II

THE STARTING point for the Chilean drama was a presidential election that took place in September 1970, three full years before the military coup whose anniversary was recently marked. There were several candidates. One—Salvador Allende, a socialist and avowed Marxist running in coalition with the Communist party—came in first, with 36.3 percent of the vote. Within a razor's edge behind him was former President Jorge Alessandri, the candidate of the Right, who received 34.9 percent. Radomiro Tomic, of the ruling Christian Democrats, came in third with 27.8 percent.

Such presidential elections, with no candidate receiving an absolute majority, were common in Chile. The constitutional procedures of the day specifically mandated that, instead of a runoff between the two leading candidates, the winner was to be selected by the Chilean congress, scheduled to meet several weeks hence. Although the legislature was not strictly required to opt for the frontrunner, firm custom suggested that it would do so. What raised the stakes in the 1970 race was the presence of Allende himself, a man with strong Soviet-bloc and Cuban connections and even more sinister associations within Chile's far Left. Consequently, between the election on September 4 and the congressional vote on October 24, Chile was awash in rumors and plots, most of them related to efforts to block Allende's accession to power.

In Washington, meanwhile, President Richard Nixon was hardly pleased by the prospect of an Allende presidency, and was taking steps to prevent it. This much has been a matter of public record for nearly 30 years. The primary sources are two reports by a committee led by the late Democratic Senator Frank Church of Idaho, one entitled *Alleged Assassination Plots of Foreign Leaders* and the other *Covert Action in Chile, 1963-1973* (both published in 1975). The findings of the Church committee exonerate the administration of unlawful activity—a noteworthy fact in light of the circumstances that both the chairman and the majority of the members (and, even more, their staffs) were unremittingly hostile to the Nixon White House and anxious, if possible, to find embarrassing linkages between it and events in Chile.

There is another primary source as well. In 1998, the Clinton administration was moved by the arrest in London of Allende's successor, the dictator Augusto Pinochet, to order the (heavily redacted) declassification of some 17,000 official U.S. documents relating to the period. The most important of these have been placed on the website of the National Security Archive—a left-wing organization not to be confused with the U.S. National Archives. They also form the basis of a new book by the Archive's Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*, released this past September 11.*

Great things have been claimed for the Clinton declassifications. Thanks to them, Christopher Hitchens has been able to boast that in his book "I produce [government] documents that plainly show the orchestration of a plot to murder General René Schneider." Likewise, he remarks, in the suit filed by the general's family, "every paper for the prosecution is a declassified document of the U.S. government." In fact, however, the Clinton declassifications are less rich in information than the findings of the Church committee, which was able to examine the documentary record in its unexpurgated form and also to interrogate the participants under oath. Nor do the Clinton declassifications contribute anything particularly useful to the case against Kissinger. Some of them actually corroborate the findings of the Church committee, and, what is even more ironic, support Kissinger's own version of events as laid out in the relevant volumes of his memoirs.

That version is itself buttressed at points by other information, especially transcripts of Kissinger's conversations with relevant figures in Washington and elsewhere. Some of these conversations took place by telephone. Records of Kissinger's telephone exchanges, covering the entire span of his government service, are now in the process of being released—they form, for instance, the primary basis of his new book, *Crisis*, dealing with the Yom Kippur war and the end of the Vietnam war. All of them have been given by him for inclusion in the Nixon Library. Although the records relating specifically to Chile are not yet in the public domain, they will be before long, and he has kindly let me review them in advance.

First and foremost, these transcripts establish that Chile was *not* an important part of the then-National Security Adviser's daily diet. This point is crucial, not least because in the BBC film we are continually being told that Kissinger micromanaged every detail of American foreign policy. While that may have been true for subjects of high geo-

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political import, Chile was not one of them. In fact, during September and October 1970—which is to say, between the Chilean election and the congressional vote—the telephone record reveals a Kissinger preoccupied with a full-blown Middle East crisis, Vietnam, a Soviet submarine base in Cuba, the Black September plane hijacking, Nixon's planned visit to Europe and to the Sixth Fleet, the defense budget, and the Pugwash conference on U.S.-Soviet relations, but with Chile only slightly. Thereafter, there is nothing at all until June 1973, when he and Nixon discuss a failed military revolt against Allende, and then no further references until after Pinochet's assumption of power with the September 11 coup.

But this is not really surprising. During much of the Allende presidency, Kissinger was in Paris, Moscow, Beijing, or other locales of far greater importance to the U.S. than Santiago. And even when the subject was again broached at the time of the coup, Kissinger was principally concerned with the possible resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew and preparations for his own confirmation hearings as Secretary of State.

This is hardly to say, however, that the telephone documents are uninformative; far from it. In what follows I shall be drawing freely on them as well as on other pertinent sources to reconstruct the true course of events.

III

President Nixon was indeed deeply distressed at the prospect of an Allende presidency in Chile, and on September 15, 1970, he summoned Kissinger, Attorney General John Mitchell, and CIA director Richard Helms for a meeting in the Oval Office to discuss the matter. As Helms's notes of the meeting reflect, Nixon was determined to "save Chile" from Allende "even if the chances [were] one in ten." At this meeting there was even loose talk about spending $10 million to provoke a coup, and "more if necessary." Helms remonstrated with the President that Allende would in all likelihood be chosen by the Chilean congress and that only a "slight possibility" existed of a move by senior elements of the country's military to block his confirmation. "Moreover," Helms recalls in his posthumous memoir, *A Look Over My Shoulder* (2003), "I noted that the [CIA] lacked the means of motivating the military to intervene." But the President was unmoved: "Standing mid-track and shouting at an oncoming locomotive," recalls Helms, "might have been more effective."

Convinced that a conventional military uprising was still not possible in Chile, the CIA, acting with the approval of the 40 Committee—the body charged with overseeing covert actions abroad—devised what in effect was a constitutional coup. The most expeditious way to prevent Allende from assuming office was somehow to convince the Chilean congress to confirm Alessandri as the winner of the election. Once elected by the congress, Alessandri—a party to the plot through intermediaries—was prepared to resign his presidency within a matter of days so that new elections could be held.

The particular charm of this ploy was that an Alessandri presidency, even if it lasted a mere 24 hours, would render outgoing President Eduardo Frei eligible to run again, this time in a two-headed race against Allende. (Chile's constitution, then as now, prohibited consecutive terms.) Under those circumstances, Frei—a Christian Democrat and still the most popular of modern Chilean presidents—could be reasonably expected to defeat Allende fair and square.

This plot, known colloquially as the "Alessandri" or "Rube Goldberg" gambit, required two things to succeed. Frei had to agree to play the role assigned to him, and he would also have to persuade his own followers in congress to cast their votes for Alessandri. Both obstacles proved insurmountable. As Ambassador Edward Korry's cables from Santiago show, though Frei was deeply troubled by the prospect of an Allende presidency—accurately predicting that it would end in "blood and horror"—he was extremely reluctant to lend himself to a perversion of Chile's electoral traditions. And even had he been amenable, he would have been unable to persuade most Christian Democrats in Congress to vote for a conservative like Alessandri, no matter how brief his putative rule. For, by 1970, Frei's party was already leaning considerably further to the Left than Frei himself; its official candidate, Radomiro Tomic, had precipitously recognized Allende as president-elect on election night.

In the meantime, even as the U.S. embassy in Santiago was pursuing the "Alessandri gambit," an alternative line of activity was being looked into by the CIA station in Chile. This policy, later labeled Track II (to distinguish it from the constitutional coup), involved finding a general or generals who, if President Frei and the Christian Democrats would not play the role assigned to them, would overthrow the outgoing government, dissolve the congress, and send the president into temporary exile. Then the interim junta would call elections

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(at an unspecified but presumably early date) in which President Frei could return and run against Allende.

Or something like that. Nixon's instructions to the CIA were simply to forestall Allende's inauguration; he was not interested in the details, or apparently in the kind of government that would emerge in Allende's place.

IV

THE SEARCH for a military man brought the CIA station into contact with General Roberto Viaux, who had been cashiered from the Chilean army in 1969 for leading a revolt against the Christian Democratic government (ostensibly in protest over military salaries and benefits). Since his dismissal, Viaux had continued to conspire, but with larger ideological and political objectives in mind. In early October, by which time Track I had run out of gas, he informed his CIA contacts that he was planning another coup and asked for a sizable drop of arms and ammunition.

Apart from the fact that (according to Helms) the CIA thought Viaux a bit "far out," the notion that a group of senior army officers required foreign arms to stage a coup did not inspire confidence. After subsequent discussion, the CIA decided Viaux was not a good bet, though it kept him on a long leash, disbursing some cash and even taking out an insurance policy on his life. Another group of generals was eventually selected for the task at hand. Before it could act, however, a roadblock had to be removed.

The chief obstacle to Track II was General René Schneider, commander-in-chief of the Chilean army. His view, simply stated, was that since the politicians had gotten the country into the mess in which it found itself, the politicians would have to find a way out. This position he maintained sturdily throughout September and October in the face of almost daily representations by retired officers, politicians, and businessmen begging him to "save the country" either by supporting a constitutional coup or by some other means. As General Carlos Prats, his second in command, has reported Schneider's words to him at the time, "the politicians are maneuvering to push the army into an adventure. They should understand that we are not so stupid as to not realize that they want to 'use' us, some to preserve their political unity, others as a 'trampoline' for Viaux." When Schneider proved intransigent, the intermediaries tried to persuade Prats, again to no effect. The architects of Track II then focused on circumventing Schneider by kidnapping him and sending him to neighboring Argentina for a season while the political situation was adjusted.

As far as Kissinger (and, for that matter, the White House) was concerned, Viaux had been told to stand down, and that was presumably the end of active American coup-plotting. As Kissinger told Nixon by telephone on October 15, reporting on a meeting with Thomas Karamassines of the CIA's Western Hemisphere division, "This looks hopeless. I turned it off. Nothing would be worse than an abortive coup." The President responded, "Just tell him to do nothing." The next day, CIA headquarters cabled its station in Santiago that although "we are to continue to generate maximum pressure" toward a coup, "a Viaux coup . . . would fail" and Viaux should be warned "against precipitate action." The message was delivered through an intermediary, leaving the CIA with the pious hope that once its wishes had been made known, Viaux would respect them.

Unfortunately, the cashiered Chilean general was pursuing agendas of his own. The kidnapping itself, which took place early on the morning of October 22, was badly bungled. Schneider resisted by extracting a handgun from his briefcase, provoking his abductors—mostly young and inexperienced—into shooting first, wounding him in four vital areas. Viaux's people panicked and took flight, some discarding their arms near the scene of the crime. The general was rushed to the capital's military hospital, where he died three days later.

V

MUCH HAS been made of the fact that between October 15, when Kissinger ordered the Viaux coup "turned off," and the death of General Schneider, the CIA station in Santiago continued to make preparations for a Track II-type coup. Thus, at some point in mid-October three submachine guns and some tear-gas canisters and gas masks were shipped to the Chilean capital through the U.S. diplomatic pouch and passed to Colonel Paul Wimert, an American military attaché, who in turn gave them to officers representing General Camilo Valenzuela, head of the Santiago garrison. This was the group that had intended to kidnap General Schneider. The exchange occurred at two in the morning of October 22; but before any use could be made of the weaponry, General Schneider lay dying in the hospital.

Eventually, the machine guns were returned un-

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used to Wimert, who discarded them in the Pacific Ocean. A Chilean military court subsequently found that Schneider had been killed by handguns, and the Church committee concluded that these weapons "were, in all probability, not those supplied by the CIA to the conspirators." The committee also noted that an unloaded machine gun had been found at the site of the killing, but professed itself "unable to determine whether [it] was one of the three supplied by the CIA." Schneider was therefore killed by conspirators who, although in contact with the CIA, were acting against its direct instruction, and apparently without its logistical assistance.

Just why the Chilean kidnapping plot went forward after Kissinger issued orders that General Viaux be "turned off" is not clear. Possibly it was because Nixon's express desire to prevent Allende's accession was so emphatic that Colonel Wimert and other CIA personnel felt somewhat at liberty to go ahead on their own. Kissinger, at any rate, seems to have been unaware of the second plot—that is, the one for which the three machine guns were sent down. In 1975, after testifying before the Church committee, Karamassines phoned the National Security Adviser and reported that he had been "asked . . . if I cleared everything in advance with you. I said no, you were too busy." In the same conversation, Kissinger remarks that, although he did not know about the second plot, he might have approved it. Then he adds: "I thought that after we turned off that one thing [the Viaux plot], nothing more had happened and in fact that other thing [the Schneider kidnapping] had happened."

In short, deplore as one might the interventionist intentions of Nixon, Kissinger, and the CIA, the fact remains that General Schneider was murdered as the result of a botched kidnapping attempt, which—as far as the White House was concerned—had been disavowed and ordered shut down a full week before it happened.

Even more has been made of a CIA cable dated October 16 instructing the Santiago station to tell Viaux that, although he was to stand down, he should "preserve [his] assets" and would "continue to have our support" if he joined forces with others either before or after Allende's inauguration and amplified his political planning for the future. In fact, Viaux played no future role whatsoever in Chilean politics. He was arrested almost immediately after Schneider's murder and sentenced by a military court to a long prison term. In August 1973, he was released and sent to Paraguay; neither he nor any of the officers involved in his plot was involved in the September 11 coup. When he finally returned to Chile, six or seven years later, the Pinochet government offered him no special consideration.

Neither Hitchens's book nor the film upon which it is based takes note of a crucial fact: namely, that the Schneider debacle had precisely the opposite effect of what was desired by the CIA and the Nixon administration. It transformed its victim into a martyr of the "constitutionalist" traditions of the Chilean army; it encouraged other constitutionalist officers to support an orderly transfer of power to the new Allende administration; it brought General Carlos Prats, another officer of firm constitutionalist leanings, to the head of the army; and it discredited right-wing cabals both inside the army and out.

It is strange that this outcome should go unremarked by critics who profess to care for Chile and who should presumably take comfort from it—but, given their invincible biases, perhaps it is not so strange after all.

VI

KISSINGER HAS been charged with criminal responsibility not just for Schneider's assassination. He has also been charged with criminal responsibility for Allende's overthrow and death three years later.

The CIA's October 16 cable contained another passage that is quoted with much relish in the BBC movie *The Trials of Henry Kissinger*, even though there is no indication that Kissinger ever saw the document. In it, the CIA enunciates its

> firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. . . . [E]fforts in this regard will continue vigorously. . . . We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource.

In the movie, these highlighted words are immediately followed by horrific images of the events of September 11, 1973, which included the bombing of the presidential palace, the arrest and torture of hundreds of dissidents, and the accession to power of an unusually cruel military junta headed by General Augusto Pinochet. As it happens, however, the quotation and the events depicted on the screen collapse two completely different moments in U.S. policy and in the history of Chile.

In the fall of 1970, Nixon certainly talked tough,

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at least in private, telling Kissinger by phone on October 15 that if Allende were to take office, "I am not going to do a thing for [Chile]," and that if he dared to nationalize U.S. property, "then we cut him off." Not surprisingly, a National Security Council memorandum (November 9, 1970), drafted several days after Allende's inauguration and released in the Clinton declassifications, called for a "correct but cool" public posture toward Chile while at the same time "maximiz[ing] pressures on the Allende government to prevent its consolidation and limit its ability to implement policies contrary to U.S. and hemispheric interests." Specifically, the memorandum advocated eliminating financial guarantees for U.S. private investment in Chile; terminating existing guarantees where possible; bringing "feasible influence" to bear at multilateral lending institutions; and offering no new commitments of bilateral economic aid. (Humanitarian aid was to be considered on a case-by-case basis.)

Meanwhile, however, an "options paper" on Chile (November 3, 1970), sketching how these policies were to be implemented, included two provisions not mentioned in the memorandum. The first was "to give articulate support, publicly and privately, to democratic elements in Chile opposed to the Allende regime by all appropriate means." The second was to "maintain effective relations with the Chilean military, letting them know that we want to cooperate but that our ability to do so depends on Chilean government actions."

The former provision laid the groundwork for the transfer of at least $6 million in covert support to non-Marxist political parties, newspapers, radio stations, and other groups during the Allende period. Thanks to these transfers, Allende found it impossible to eliminate his political competition by confiscating the sources of their funding or by intentionally bankrupting independent newspapers or radio stations through politically inspired strikes. Without the American subventions, Chile's pluralistic political system—including an independent press and electronic media—would in all probability have disappeared long before General Pinochet and his associates overthrew the government and installed a dictatorship of their own. As for the latter provision, it merely outlined a "business-as-usual" relationship with the Chilean military while saying and doing nothing to encourage the military's involvement in politics.

THE DOCUMENTARY evidence is thus unambiguous: the most serious charge that can be levied against the Nixon administration is that it contemplated economic sanctions against Chile at a time when Allende had yet to lay a hand on American investments in the country and was still making payments on Chile's debts. But even that envisaged policy was never truly implemented. In spite of Nixon's decision to end all bilateral assistance not already committed, new appropriations—however token in proportion to the past—were authorized during every year of the Allende government. Even after the increasingly bankrupt country defaulted on its debts to the United States in November 1971, "old" U.S. loans continued to be disbursed, amounting (according to one U.S. Treasury estimate) to $200 million for 1971 and 1972; nor was humanitarian aid withdrawn. Though Chile nationalized American holdings in the copper industry in 1971 without making a satisfactory arrangement for compensation—pushing the U.S. government-funded Overseas Private Investment Corporation to the brink of bankruptcy—the notorious Hickenlooper Amendment (requiring a suspension of aid to any country that expropriates U.S. property without payment) was never invoked.

Besides, Chile's default constituted a de-facto relief measure for the Allende regime, amounting in 1972 alone to $243 million—an effective transfer of resources greater by many orders of magnitude than that tendered to the Frei administration at a time when the latter was supposedly Washington's "showcase" in Latin America. In addition, Allende was able to tap new sources of credit in Western and Eastern Europe—in 1972, somewhere between $600 and $950 million. As a key functionary of his finance ministry would recall, by mid-1973 "Chile had rebuilt and diversified its system of external finance" and by June of that year had obtained short-term credits amounting to $547 million. To this should be added the fact that between November 1970 and September 1973, Chile was able to draw slightly more than $100 million from the International Monetary Fund, presumably over the protests of U.S. representatives there.

The one area where U.S. aid increased threefold during the Allende period was military assistance. If this sounds sinister, two crucial facts should be borne in mind. First, the aid relieved pressures on the Chilean budget, allowing money that would otherwise have been used for weaponry and training to be diverted to improved housing allowances and other amenities for the uniformed services. Second, Allende himself welcomed this assistance, which permitted him to boast, truthfully, that Chile's armed forces were better off under a So-

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cialist-Communist government than under its Christian Democratic predecessor. Indeed, to the end of his regime President Allende saw the armed forces as an element on the chessboard to be used and manipulated for his own political purposes.

VII

WHAT, THEN, brought about the September 11, 1973 coup? The real causes must be sought in the devastating collapse of the Chilean economy that took place during the Allende presidency, as well as in Chile's increasingly polarized political environment.

On November 4, 1970, Salvador Allende assumed the presidency in an atmosphere of euphoria and even good will almost unimaginable in retrospect. Apart from his own four-party coalition (Popular Unity) headed by the Socialist and Communist parties, the new president could count on the "critical support" of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which historically had questioned the possibility of social change in Chile through peaceful electoral means. More important still, he took office, as we have seen, at a time when the leading opposition party, the Christian Democrats, was anxious to compete for the labels "progressive" and even "revolutionary." After his inauguration, Allende met with the Christian Democratic leadership in an atmosphere of good humor and camaraderie; the chief of the delegation even urged the president to "help us be good *allendistas*."

Instead, intoxicated by ideological triumphalism, Allende's people did everything they could to split the Christian Democrats, luring the party's left wing over to the governing coalition while wreaking political vengeance on the rest. As Allende supporters seized factories and farms throughout Chile, Christian Democratic workers were dismissed and their union leaders refused access to the premises. Political discrimination even extended to nonpolitical individuals for family reasons; the son of President Frei, an engineer, found himself in difficulty when his workplace passed into the hands of government "intervenors."

The net effect of these actions was, paradoxically, to discredit the "collaborationist" leadership of the Christian Democrats and bring about its replacement with more conservative figures. By 1973, the party had been pushed into a tactical electoral alliance with the Right, a development that would have been unthinkable three years earlier. In March 1973, in the last parliamentary election held under Allende, the combined Christian Democratic-Conservative list won a thumping 56 percent of the vote.

These and other ominous shifts in political allegiance were hugely facilitated by Allende's domestic economic actions—including the harassment of small business, planned dislocations in the country's food supply, and the uninhibited printing of unbacked currency. The constant threat to independent operators led to a major trucker's strike in 1972, which then spread disastrously to other sectors of the economy; tampering with the country's distribution system produced widespread shortages of food; and the flooding of the country with paper money ended in uncontrollable inflation.

One result of the ensuing chaos was that Allende found himself relying heavily on the military just to remain in power. Several times he was compelled to ask flag officers to serve in key ministries; in the final phase of the regime, General Prats was functioning as his minister of interior. These innovations introduced enormous stresses within the armed forces; Prats's growing closeness to Allende—it amounted to a kind of ideological seduction—undermined his own position in the military, and in August 1973 he was forced to go into voluntary exile in neighboring Argentina.

VIII

BY THAT time, Allende's problems had become so acute as to merit notice once more by the President of the United States. The immediate occasion was a failed military plot against Allende that had been quashed by loyalist troops. Nixon and Kissinger discussed the matter by telephone on July 4, 1973. Not surprisingly, the President expressed regret that the coup failed ("if only the army could get a few people behind them!"). For his part, Kissinger told the President that "we had nothing to do with it." Both agreed that the prospect of flag officers leaving the Chilean cabinet was bound to deepen the crisis and put Allende in an even more disadvantageous position.

For the next two months, no further phone conversations took place between Kissinger and the Nixon White House on the subject of Chile. Not until the events surrounding the September 11 coup did they resume.

Within hours of that event, the prestige American press was circulating rumors to the effect that Washington had had prior word of the plot. On September 13, for example, the *New York Times* carried a headline—"U.S. Had Warning of Coup,

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Aides Say"—leading readers to infer that knowledge possessed by Washington and deliberately withheld from the Allende government had spelled the difference between its survival and its demise. In fact, however, as Ken Rush, a White House aide, said to Kissinger on that same day, "What [Assistant Secretary of State Jack] Kubish told me was that we knew nothing about it; that we had not been told about it and it came as a complete surprise to us." Rush added: "I didn't know that a coup was coming at any particular date. We'd been hearing coup rumors for about a year."

Kissinger was better informed than the White House. A few days before the coup, Ambassador Nathaniel Davis had been recalled to Washington, not to discuss Chile *per se* but to be looked over as a possible candidate for a high State Department post. As he walked into Kissinger's office, he was asked immediately about the possibilities of a coup. The recorded transcript of their conversation was reproduced by Kissinger in his memoir, *Years of Upheaval* (1982). "In Chile you can never count on anything," the ambassador said, "but the odds are in favor of a coup, though I can't give you any time frame." Kissinger: "We are going to stay out of that, I assume." Davis: "Yes. My firm instructions to everybody on the staff are that we are not to involve ourselves in any way. . . . Our biggest problem is to keep from getting caught in the middle."

Davis's "information" was no secret. The truth is that every cat and dog in Chile knew a coup was coming at some point in September 1973, and so did Allende himself. The only questions were who would lead it, who would replace Allende, and what ideological tendency would prevail once the government was dissolved. During a private lunch with the president a few days before his departure into Argentine exile, General Prats himself warned Allende that he would be overthrown within the next ten days. When the president asked whether Prats's ministerial replacement, General Augusto Pinochet, would remain loyal, Prats said he thought so but that the issue was irrelevant. "Even the most constitutionalist of officers," he later recalled telling the president in this most bizarre of exchanges, "will understand that a division within the armed forces would mean civil war." In effect, officers would either respect the decision of the coup-makers or be swept aside.*

Contrary, then, to what the film *The Trials of Henry Kissinger* suggests, there was no straight line between the events of 1970 and the coup of 1973. Rather, conscious choices by Allende and his own people drove the military into action that it would normally have been disinclined to carry out. This was certainly the impression conveyed, for example, by a U.S. naval attaché who cabled a few days after the coup that the "decision to remove the Allende government was made with extreme reluctance and only after the deepest soul-searching by all concerned."

As for President Nixon, he was evidently pleased—how could he not have been?—but exhibited no sense of complicity with the coup-makers themselves. As he said on the phone to Kissinger on September 16, "Well, we didn't—as you know—our hand doesn't show on this one though." To which Kissinger replied, "We didn't do it."

IX

THE UNITED STATES did play a role in Chile, though not precisely the one ascribed to it. It attempted—unsuccessfully—to forestall Allende's confirmation by the Chilean congress. But once he was in office, the thrust of U.S. policy shifted to sustaining a democratic opposition and an independent press until Allende could be defeated in the presidential elections scheduled for 1976. To the extent that this opposition was able to survive under extraordinarily difficult economic circumstances—winning control of the Chilean congress in March 1973—one might even credit the Nixon administration with preventing the consolidation of Allende's "totalitarian project" (to use the apt expression of Eduardo Frei).

What then followed—a right-wing dictatorship that crushed not merely the Allende regime but Chilean democracy itself—was not and could not have been predicted, partly because of the military's own apolitical traditions and partly because, by mid-1973, the opposition to Allende was dominated by forces of proved democratic provenance. To the contrary, Washington's presumption—that in the 1976 elections, if they were allowed to take place, the opposition would win decisively—was amply supported by the facts. It was only the savagery of the subsequent Pinochet dictatorship that in hindsight altered the historical picture.

As the years passed, the contumely into which Allende and his associates had deservedly fallen in

* Prats's memoirs are of particular interest because they were written in exile at a time when he had become, *post hoc*, a virtual partisan of the Allende regime and was seen by many as a potential challenger to Pinochet's military government. They were completed just before he and his wife were killed by a car bomb in Buenos Aires planted by Pinochet's secret police, but remained unpublished until 1985 when book censorship was ended in Chile.

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Chile at the time of their overthrow came to be neutralized, then canceled out, by martyrdom. Then, too, the undifferentiated contempt with which the military subsequently treated all political forces except those on the far Right threw together people who in August and September 1973 had been ready to face off in a kind of civil war. In that sense, General Pinochet—in spite of himself—may be considered the unanticipated progenitor of the Socialist-Christian Democratic coalition governments that have governed Chile from 1989 to the present.

The Allende regime also benefited retrospectively from its evident association with the old democratic order; it had, after all, been elected. How much longer it would have remained part of that order, which it was busily undermining, must remain a matter of controversy. But to the day of its demise, it enjoyed a marginal legitimacy that would elude its military successor. In this respect, too, Pinochet and his associates played an unexpected role—rescuing for Allende and his government a place in Chilean history they did not earn and to which they could not otherwise have looked forward.

Such are a few of the pesky but all-important details that "revisionists" like Hitchens and the makers of *The Trials of Henry Kissinger* are at pains to avoid, if indeed they were ever aware of them in the first place. Those who mourn the loss of a Marxist regime in Chile are free to denounce the adversarial efforts undertaken by Nixon, Kissinger, and the CIA, as are the legions of marchers with their placards equating American officials with Nazis and mass murderers. Those, like the editorialists of the *New York Times*, who are indifferent to the uses of anti-Americanism are likewise free to join the chorus. But anyone with a serious concern for historical truth—or for the long-term survival of democracy in Chile—or for the reputation of the United States and the policy it endeavored with honor to implement during the tortuous decades of the cold war—might well be moved to reexamine the record.

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Oh Dad, Dear Dad

Joseph Epstein

It will soon be five years since my father died, leaving me, at a mere sixty-two, orphaned. He was ninety-one when he died, in his sleep, in his own apartment in Chicago. Such was the relentlessness of his vigor that, until his last year, I referred to him behind his back as the Energizer Bunny: he just kept going. I used to joke—half-joke is closer to it—about "the vague possibility" that he would predecease me. Now he has done it, and his absence, even today, takes getting used to.

When an aged parent dies, one's feelings are greatly mixed. I was relieved that my father had what seems to have been an easeful death. In truth, I was also relieved at not having to worry about him any longer (though, apart from running certain errands and keeping his checkbook in the last few years of his life, he really gave my wife and me very little to worry about). But with him dead, I have been made acutely conscious that I am next in line for the guillotine: *C'est*, as Pascal would have it, *la condition humaine*.

Now that my father is gone, many questions will never be answered. Not long before he died I was driving him to his accountant's office and, without any transition, he said, "I wanted a third child, but your mother wasn't interested." This was the first I had heard about it. He was never a very engaged parent, certainly not by the full-court-press standards of today. Having had two sons—me and my younger brother—had he, I suddenly wondered, begun to yearn for a daughter?

"Why wasn't mother interested?" I asked.

"I don't remember," he said. Subject closed.

On another of our drives in that last year, he asked me if I had anything in the works in the way of business. I told him I had been invited to give a lecture in Philadelphia. He inquired if there was a fee. I said there was: $5,000.

"For an hour's talk?" he said, a look of astonishment on his face.

"Fifty minutes, actually," I said, unable to resist provoking him lightly. His look changed from astonishment to bitter certainty. The country had to be in one hell of a sorry condition if they were passing out that kind of dough for mere talk from his son.

Was he, then, a good father? This was the question an acquaintance put to me at lunch recently. When I asked what he meant by good, he said: "Was he, for example, fair?"

My father was completely fair, never showing the least favoritism between my brother and me (a judgment my brother has confirmed). He also set an example of decency, nicely qualified by realism. "No one is asking you to be an angel in this world," he told me when I was fourteen, "but that doesn't give

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you warrant to be a son-of-a-bitch." And, as this suggests, he was an unrelenting fount of advice, some of it pretty obvious, none of it stupid. "Always put something by for a rainy day." "People know more about you than you think." "Work for a man for a dollar an hour—always give him a dollar and a quarter's effort."

Some of his advice seemed wildly misplaced. "Next to your brother, money's your best friend," was a remark made all the more unconvincing by the fact that my brother and I, nearly six years apart in age, were never that close to begin with. On the subject of sex, the full extent of his wisdom was: "Be careful." Of what, exactly, I was to be careful—venereal disease? pregnancy? getting entangled with the wrong girl?—he never filled in.

My father and I spent a lot of time together when I was an adolescent. He manufactured and imported costume jewelry (also known as junk jewelry) and novelties—identification bracelets, cigarette lighters, miniature cameras, bolo ties—which he sold to Woolworth's, to the International Shoe Company, to banks, and to concessionaires at state fairs. I traveled with him in the summer, spelling him at the wheel of his Buicks and Oldsmobiles, toting his sample cases, writing up orders, listening to him tell—*ad infinitum, ad nauseam*—the same three or four jokes to customers. We shared rooms in less than first-class hotels in Midwestern towns—Des Moines, Minneapolis, Columbus—but never achieved anything close to intimacy, at least in our conversation. His commercial advice was as useful as his advice about sex. "Always keep a low overhead." "You make your money in buying right, you know, not in selling." "Never run away from business." Some of it has stuck, however: nearly a half-century later, I still find it hard to turn down a writing assignment lest I prove guilty of running away from business.

My least favorite of his maxims was: "You can't argue with success." In my growing-up days, I thought there was nothing better to argue with. I tried to tell him why, but I never seemed to get my point across. The only time our arguments ever got close to the shouting stage was over the question of whether or not federal budgets had to be balanced. I was then in my twenties, and our ignorance on this question was equal and mutual—though he turned out to be right: all things considered, balanced is better.

When not in his homiletic mode, my father could be very penetrating. "There are three ways to do business in this country," he once told me. "At the top level you rely heavily on national advertising and public relations. At the next level, you take people out to dinner or golfing, you buy them theater tickets, supply women. And then there's my level." Pause. Asked what went on there, he replied: "I cut prices." His level, I thought then and still think, was much the most honorable.

He appreciated jokes, although in telling them he could not sustain even a brief narrative. His own best wit entailed a comic resignation. In his late eighties, he made the mistake of sending to a great-nephew whom he had never met a bar-mitzvah check for $1,000, instead of the $100 he had intended. When I discovered the error and pointed it out to him, he paused only briefly, smiled, and said, "Boy, is his younger brother going to be disappointed."

Work was the place where my father seemed most alive, most impressive. Born in Montreal and having never finished high school, he came to America at seventeen, not long before the Depression. He took various flunky jobs, but soon found his niche as a salesman. "Kid," one of his bosses once told him, so good was he at his work, "try to remember that this desk I'm sitting behind is not for sale." Eventually, he owned his own small business.

He worked six days a week, usually arriving at 7:30 A.M. If he could find some excuse to go down to work on Sunday, he was delighted to do so. On his rare vacations, he would call in two or three times a day to find out what was in the mail, who telephoned, what deliveries arrived.

He never had more than seven or eight employees, but the business was fairly lucrative. In the late 1960's I recall him saying to me, "The country must be in terrible shape. You should see the crap I'm selling." In later years, a nephew worked for him; neither my brother nor I ever seriously thought about joining the business, sensing early on that it was a one-man show, without sufficient oxygen for two. One day, after he had had a falling-out with this nephew, my father said to me, "He's worked for me for fifteen years. We open at 8:30, and for fifteen years he has come in at exactly 8:30. You'd think once—just once—the kid would be early."

"I call people rich," Henry James has Ralph Touchett say in *The Portrait of a Lady*, "when they're able to meet the requirements of their imagination." Although not greatly wealthy, my father made enough money fully to meet the demands of his. He could give ample sums to (mostly Jewish) charities, help out poor relatives, pay for his sons' education, buy his wife the diamonds and furs and good clothes that were among the trophies

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of my parents' generation's success, in retirement take his grandsons to Israel, Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Soviet Union, New Zealand. At the very end, he told me that what most pleased him about his financial independence was never having to fall back on anyone else for help, right up to and including his exit from the world.

IN MY late twenties, my father, then in his late fifties, had a mild heart attack, and I feared I would lose him without ever getting to know him better. Having just recently returned to Chicago after a stint directing the anti-poverty program in Little Rock, Arkansas, I thought it might be a good thing if we were to meet once a week for lunch. On the first of these occasions, I took him to a French restaurant on the near north side. The lunch lasted nearly 90 minutes. I could practically smell his boredom, feel his longing to get back to "the place," as he called his business, then located on North Avenue west of Damon. We never lunched alone again until after my mother's death, when I felt he needed company.

At some point—around, I think, the time he hit sixty—my father, like many another successful man operating within a fairly small circle, ceased listening. A courteous, even courtly man, he was, please understand, never rude. He would give you your turn and not interrupt, nodding his head in agreement at much of what you said. But he was merely waiting—waiting to insert one of his own thoughts. He had long since mastered the falsely modest introductory clause, which he put to regular use: "I'm inclined to believe that there is more good than bad in the world," he might offer, or "I may be mistaken, but don't you agree that disease and war are Mother Nature's way of thinning out the population?" I winced when I learned that the father of a friend of mine, having met him a few times, had taken to referring to my father as "the Rabbi."

Although he did not dwell on the past, neither was he much interested in the future. He had an astonishing ability to block things out, including his own illnesses, even surgeries. He claimed to have no memory of his heart attack, and he chose not to remember that, like many men past their mid-eighties, he had had prostate cancer. "I'm a great believer in mind over matter," he used to say.

He also liked to say that there wasn't anything really new under the sun. When I would report some excess to him—for example, a lunch check of $180 for two in New York—he would say: "What're ya, kidding me?" Although he was greatly interested in human nature, psychology at the level of the individual held no attraction for him. If I told him about someone's odd or unpredictable or stupid behavior, he would respond, "What is he, crazy?"

Then, after his retirement at seventy-five, my father began to write. His own father had composed two books—one in Hebrew and one in Yiddish—for which my father had paid most of the expense of private publication. Offering to sell some of these books, he kept a hundred or so copies stored in our basement. This turned out to be a ruse for increasing the monthly stipend he was already sending my grandfather: each month he would add $30, $45, or $50, saying it represented payment for books he had sold. Then one day a UPS truck pulled up with another hundred books and a note from my grandfather, who had grown worried that his son's stock was running low.

And now here was I, his eldest son, also publishing books. My father must have felt—with a heavy dose here of *mutatis mutandis*—like the Mendelssohn who was the son of the philosopher and the father of the composer but never quite had his own shot at a touch of intellectual glory. So he, too, began writing. His preferred form was the two- or three-sentence *pensée* (he would never have called it that), usually pointing a moral. "Man forces nature to reveal her chemical secrets," is an example of his work in this line. "Nature evens the score because man cannot always control the chemicals."

In the middle of the morning my phone would ring, and it would be my father with a question: "How do you spell *affinity*?" Then he would ask if he was using the word correctly in the passage he was writing, which he would read to me. I always told him I thought his observations were interesting, or accurate, or that I had never thought of the point he was making. Often I tossed in minor corrections, or I might suggest that his second sentence didn't quite follow from his first. I loved him too much to say that a lot of what he had written bordered on the commonplace and, alas, often crossed that border. I'm not sure he cared all that much about my opinion anyway.

He began to carry a small notepad in his shirt pocket. On his afternoon walks, new material would occur to him. Adding pages daily—hourly, almost—he announced one day that he had a manuscript of more than a thousand pages. He referred to these writings offhandedly as "my stuff," or "my crap," or "the *chazerai* I write." Still, he wanted to know what I thought about sending them to a publisher. The situation was quite hopeless; but I lied, said it was worth a try, and wrote a letter over his

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name to accompany a packet of fifty or so pages of typescript. He began with the major publishers, then went to the larger university presses, then to more obscure places.

After twenty or so rejections, I suggested a vanity-press arrangement—never using the deadly word "vanity." For $10,000 or so, he could have 500 copies of a moderate-size book printed for his posterity. But he had too much pride for that, and after a while he ceased to send out his material. What he was writing, he concluded, had too high a truth quotient—it was, he once put it to me, "too hot"—for the contemporary world. But he kept on scribbling away, flagging only in the last few years of his life, when he complained that his inspiration was drying up.

Altogether, he had ended up with some 2,700 pages—his earnest, ardent attempt to make sense of the world before departing it. Although he had no more luck in this than the rest of us, there was, indisputably, something gallant about the attempt.

Becoming aware of our fathers' fallibilities is a jolt. When I was six years old, we lived in a neighborhood where I was the youngest kid on the block and thus prey to eight- and nine-year-olds with normal boyish bullying tendencies. One of them, a kid named Denny Price, was roughing me up one day when I told him that if he didn't stop, my father would get him. "Ya fadda," said Denny Price, "is an asshole." Even to hear my father spoken of this way sickened me. I would have preferred another punch in the stomach.

World War II was over by the time I was eight, but I remember being disappointed that my father had not gone to fight. (He was too old.) I also recall my embarrassment—I was nine—at seeing him at an office party of a jewelry company he then worked for (Beiler-Levine on Wabash Avenue), clownishly placing his hand on the stomach of a pregnant secretary, closing his eyes, and predicting the sex of the child.

He was less stylish than many of my friends' fathers. He had no clothes for leisure, and when he went to the beach (which he rarely did), he marched down in black business shoes, socks with clocks on them, and very white legs. He cared not at all about sports—which, when young, was the only thing I did care about. Later, I saw him come to wrong decisions about real estate, worry in a fidgeting way over small sums he was owed, make serious misjudgments about people. He preferred to operate, rather as in his writing, at too high a level of generality. "Mother nature abhors a vacuum," he used to say, and I, to myself, would think, "No, Dad, it's a vacuum-cleaner salesman she abhors." At some point in my thirties I concluded that my father was not nearly so subtle or penetrating as my mother.

What do boys and young men want from their fathers? For the most part I think we want precisely what they cannot give us—a painless transfusion of wisdom, a key to life's mysteries, the secret to happiness, assurance that one's daily struggles and aggravations amount to something more than some stupid cosmic joke with no punch line. Oh, Dad, you have been here longer than I, you have been in the trenches, up and over the hill, quick, before you exit, fill me in: does it all add up, cohere, make any sense at all, what's the true story, the real *emes*, tell me, please, Dad? By the time my father reached sixty, I knew he could not deliver any of this.

But, now past sixty myself, I cannot say I expect to do better. Besides, the virtues my father did have, and did deliver on, were impressive. Steadfastness was high on the list. He was a man you could count on. He saw my mother through a three-year losing fight against cancer, doing the shopping, the laundry, even some of the cooking, trying to keep up her spirits, never letting his own spirits fall. He called himself a realist, but he was in fact a sentimentalist, with a special weakness, in his later years, for his extended family. (He and his twin brother were the youngest of ten children, eight boys and two girls, my father being the only financial success among them.) He had great reverence for his own father, always repeating his sayings, marveling at his wisdom.

We may not have reverenced him; but certainly we paid him obeisance. His was the last generation of fathers to draw off the old Roman authority of the *paterfamilias*. The least tyrannical of men, my father was nevertheless accorded a high level of service at home because of his role as head of the household and efficient breadwinner. Dinner always awaited his return from work. One did not open the evening paper until he had gone through it first. "Get your father a glass of water," my mother would say, or, "Get your father his slippers," and my brother and I would do so without quibble. A grandfather now myself, I have never received, nor ever expect to receive, any of these little services.

My father lived comfortably with his contradictions—another great virtue, I think. He called himself an agnostic, for example, and belonged to no synagogue, yet it was clear that he would have been greatly disappointed had any of his grandsons not

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had a bar mitzvah. He always invoked the soundness of business principles, yet in cases of the least conflict between these principles and a generous impulse, he would inevitably act on the latter: loaning money to the wrong people, giving breaks to men who did not seem to deserve them, helping out financially whenever called upon to do so. To bums stopping him for a handout he used to say, "Beat it. I'm working this side of the street," yet he gave his old suits and overcoats to a poor brain-fozzled alcoholic who slept in the doorways on North Avenue near his place of business.

NOT LONG before my high-school graduation, my father told me that he would naturally pay for college but wondered if maybe I, who had never shown even mild interest as a student, might not do better to forget about it. "I think you have the makings of a terrific salesman," he said. But he let me make the decision. I chose college, chiefly because most of my friends were going and I, still stalling for time, was not yet ready to go out into the world.

But then my father allowed me to make nearly all my own decisions. True, he had insisted that I go to Hebrew school, on the grounds, often repeated, that "A Jew should know something of his background, about where he comes from." But apart from that, my brother and I decided what we would study, where we would go to school, and with whom. He never told me what kind of work to go into, offering only another of his much-repeated apothegms: "You've got to love your work." He never told me whom or what kind of woman to marry, how to raise children, what to do with my money. He let me go absolutely my own way.

Only now does it occur to me that I never sought my father's approval; growing up, I mainly tried to avoid his disapproval, so that I could retain the large domain of freedom he permitted me. For starters, he was unqualified to dispense approval where I sought it: for my athletic prowess when young; for my intellectual work when older. Then, too, artificially building up his sons' confidence through a steady stream of heavy and continuous approval—the modus operandi of many contemporary parents—was not his style. "You handled that in a very business-like way," my father once told me about some small matter I had arranged for him, but I cannot recall his otherwise praising me. I would send him published copies of things I wrote, and he would read them, usually confining his response to "very interesting" or remarking on how something I said had suggested a thought of his own.

In my middle thirties I was offered a job teaching at a nearby university. In balancing the debits and credits of the offer, I suggested to my father that the job would allow me to spend more time with my two sons. "I don't mean to butt in," he said, before proceeding to deliver the longest speech of his paternal career, "but that sounds to me like a load of crap. If you're going to take a teaching job, take it because you want to teach, or because you can use the extra time for other work, not because of your kids. Con yourself into thinking you make decisions because of your children and you'll end up one of those pathetic old guys whining about his children's ingratitude. Your responsibilities to your sons include feeding them and seeing they have a decent place to live and helping them get the best schooling they're capable of and teaching them right from wrong and making it clear they can come to you if they're in trouble and setting them an example of how a man should live. That's how I looked upon my responsibility to you and your brother. But for a man, work comes first."

In the raising of my own sons, I attempted, roughly, to imitate my father—but already the historical moment for confidence of the kind he had brought to fatherhood was past. For one thing, I was a divorced father (though with custody of my sons), so I had already done something to them that my father never did to me—break up their family. For another, I found myself regularly telling my sons that I loved them. I told them this so often that they probably came to doubt it.

True, I wasn't like one of those fathers who these days show up for all their children's school activities, driving them to four or five different kinds of lessons, making a complete videotaped record of their first eighteen years, taking them to lots of ball games, art galleries, and (ultimately, no doubt) the therapist. But I was, nonetheless, plenty nervous in the service, wondering if I was doing the right thing, never really confident I was good enough—or even adequate. The generation of fathers now raising children, I sense, is even more nervous than I was then, and the service itself, thanks to feminism and other factors, has become a good deal more arduous.

MANY ARE the kinds of bad luck one can have in a father. Being the son of certain men—I think here of Alger Hiss's son, Tony, who seems to have devoted so much of his life to defending his father's reputation—can seem almost a full-time job. One can have a father whose success is so great

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as to stunt one's own ambition, or a father whose failure has so embittered him as to leave one with permanently bleak views and an overwhelmingly dark imagination of disaster. Having too strong a father can be a problem, but so can having too weak a father. A father may desert his family and always leave one in doubt, or a father may commit suicide and leave one in a despair much darker and deeper than any doubt. Worst luck of all, perhaps, is to have one's father die of illness or accident before one has even known him.

"They fuck you up, your mum and dad," famously wrote Philip Larkin, in a line that is not only amusing but, it is agreed, universally true. But need it be true? Ought one to blame one's parents for all that one (disappointingly) is, or that one (equally disappointingly) has never become? One of the most successful men I know once told me, without the least passion in his voice, "Actually, I dislike my parents quite a bit"—which didn't stop him, when his parents were alive, from being a good and dutiful son. (We are, after all, commanded to honor our parents, not necessarily to love them.) Taking the heat off parents for the full responsibility for the fate of their children throws the responsibility back on oneself, where it usually belongs. "I mean, I blame for every fuckups in my life my parents?," asked Mikhail Baryshnikov, who had a horrendously rough upbringing. His resounding answer to his own question was "No."

The best luck is, of course, to love one's parents without complication, which has been my fortunate lot. Whether consciously or not—I cannot be certain even now—my parents gave me the greatest gift of all. By leaving me alone, while somehow never leaving me in doubt that I could count upon them when needed, they gave me the freedom to go my own way and to become myself. Of the almost cripplingly excessive concern for the proper rearing of children in our own day, in all its fussiness and fear, my father's response, I'm almost certain, would have been: "What're they, crazy?"

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OBSERVATIONS

Charles Murray's All-Stars

Terry Teachout

DESPITE THE faddishness of postmodern ways of thinking, I doubt very many people truly believe that quality in art and literature is only an arbitrary construct, imposed by the powerful on the powerless for political purposes. Even intellectuals who pay lip service to this fundamental tenet of postmodernism, I suspect, hew in private to the more common view of aesthetic quality summed up by the art critic Clement Greenberg:

> One of the wonderful things about art is that everybody has to discover the criteria of quality by himself. They can't be communicated by word or demonstration. Yet they are objective. . . . You have to find out for yourself by looking and experiencing. And the people who try hardest and look hardest end up, over the ages, by agreeing with one another in the main. That I call the consensus of taste.

Still, it appears that a *certain* number of nominally educated Americans do indeed believe such terms as "quality," "beauty," and "greatness" to be wholly subjective. For them, Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Rembrandt are "great" not because of the towering and self-evident merits of their work but because greatness has been ascribed to them by virtue of their status among dead white European males. Given the incapacity of such minds to apprehend the greatness of art through its immediate experience, how else might one persuade them of its objective existence?

The hallmark of Charles Murray's work is its commitment to the persuasive power of statistical analysis, the fruits of which he invariably presents to his readers in a calm, reasonable tone, no matter how explosive their implications may be. In this respect, Murray's latest book, *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences, 800 B.C. to 1950*,* is entirely consistent with his earlier *Losing Ground* (1984) and *The Bell Curve* (1998), in which he sought to persuade skeptics to accept conclusions about, respectively, welfare and intelligence-testing that cut sharply against the grain of conventional wisdom.

In *Human Accomplishment*, Murray takes a similar tack, setting out to demonstrate that some artists and scientists are objectively better than others, and that their collective achievements can be both measured and subjected to meaningful statistical analysis. In his words:

> It is possible to distinguish the important from the trivial, the fine from the coarse, the credible from the meretricious, and the elegant from the vulgar. Doing so is not a simple matter, and no single observer is infallible, but a realm of objective knowledge about excellence exists. That knowledge can be tapped systematically and arranged as data that meet scientific standards of reliability and validity.

To those unconvinced by the postmodern world view, the first part of this claim will seem so obvious as to border on truism. But is it really possible to make "scientific" use of our "objective knowledge about excellence"? And if so, does it make sense to apply identical methodology to such profoundly different realms of human thought

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY*'s regular music critic and the drama critic of the* Wall Street Journal, *also writes about the arts at www.terryteachout.com.*

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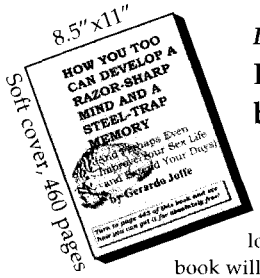

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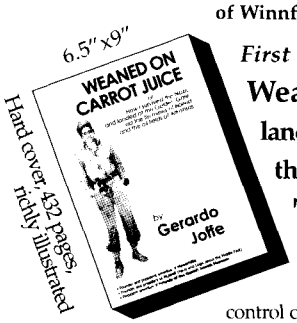

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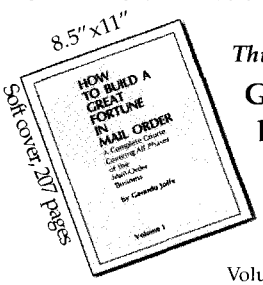

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as art and science? For all its surface reasonableness, *Human Accomplishment* turns out to betray certain assumptions about the world of art that are so problematic as to call into question the fundamental validity of its author's approach.

THE UNDERLYING premise of *Human Accomplishment* is what postmodern scholars, with their stress on social and political context, refer to contemptuously as "the great-man theory of history." Murray, unabashedly, puts it like this:

> One may acknowledge the undoubted role of the cultural context in fostering or inhibiting great art, but still recall that it is not enough that the environment be favorable. Somebody must actually do the deed.

The heart of this book, accordingly, is a series of lists of great artistic and scientific deeds done between 800 B.C.E. and 1950, along with the 4,002 "significant figures" who did them. These lists are not idiosyncratic. Rather, they have been compiled through an analysis of standard reference works, an approach consistent with Murray's contention that "given a large number of expert opinions about a dozen specific qualities of a work of art, we will not see a random set of responses, but ones that cluster around a central tendency." This central tendency he takes to be the "objective" element in human accomplishment.

A specific example will help illustrate the approach. In order to create his inventory of significant events and figures in Western visual art, Murray consulted such reference works as Helen Gardner's *Art Through the Ages*, H.W. Janson's *History of Art*, and Wolf Stadler's twelve-volume *Lexikon der Kunst*, compiling in each case a list of artists mentioned and the frequency with which they are cited. These lists were then combined to create a preliminary list of 1,232 names, and the individual sources statistically analyzed to determine how closely they correlated with one another.

In all cases, the correlation coefficients were exceptionally high, leading Murray to draw the following conclusion:

> Because different critics are tapping into a common understanding of importance in their field, they make similar choices. Various factors go into the estimate of importance, but they are in turn substantially associated with excellence.

Murray defines his "significant figures" as those mentioned in at least 50 percent of his sources; in all, 479 Western artists made the cut. Each of these figures was then assigned an "index" score indicating relative position within the list on which his name appears, with all top scores arbitrarily set at 100.

In the Western art list, the top scorer is Michelangelo, followed by Picasso (77), Raphael (73), Leonardo (61), Titian (61), Dürer (56), Rembrandt (56), Giotto (54), Bernini (53), and Cézanne (50). The highest-scoring names on the other lists are equally familiar. Western literature, for instance, is led by Shakespeare, Goethe, and Dante, Western philosophy by Aristotle, Plato, and Kant, and Western music by Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach. This reinforces Murray's contention that the so-called "canonical" figures in Western culture are, in fact, not merely famous but objectively great.

READERS OF *The Bell Curve* will immediately spot the resemblance between the method used by Murray in *Human Accomplishment* and the methodology of standardized intelligence tests, which measure in varying degrees a hypothetical "general intelligence" factor common to all tests of cognitive ability and known to psychologists as *g*. Because *g* is a mental capacity that cannot be directly measured as one measures (say) blood pressure, it resists simple definition. Indeed, the experimental psychologist Edwin Boring, writing in 1921, famously went so far as to "define" intelligence as "what the tests test."

The seeming circularity of this nondefinition has long been remarked by hostile commentators who disapprove of intelligence testing, and it is likely that the same sort of case will be made against the way *Human Accomplishment* approaches the question of greatness in art. For Murray, greatness is what the experts say it is, a definition that will hardly convince those who believe the experts are themselves part of the problem.

Equally unsatisfying to some readers will be the conclusions Murray draws from his data, though few if any of these conclusions will come as a surprise to those untrammeled by political correctness. Ninety-eight percent of his "significant figures," for example, are male, and most of them lived in Britain, France, Germany, and Italy (in that order), which collectively account for 72 percent of all significant figures active between 1400 and 1950.

Nor does Murray shrink from interpreting these now-uncomfortable facts by means of equally uncomfortable arguments from history. Among other things, his data lead him to conclude that human accomplishment in the arts and sciences is "facilitated by growing national wealth" and "fostered by political regimes that give de-facto freedom of action to their potential artists and scholars." Even more controversially, he argues that human accomplishment is "fostered by a culture in which the most talented people believe that life has a purpose" and which "encourages the belief that individuals can act efficaciously as individuals, and encourages them to do so."

In practice, of course, what this means is that the Judeo-Christian West has done the most to foster

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human accomplishment throughout the latter part of recorded history, and that non-Western cultures will similarly thrive only to the extent that their values resemble those of the West. Such a conclusion might have been deliberately calculated to enrage postmodern thinkers.

EVEN THOSE predisposed to agree with Murray's findings, however, may quarrel with him in at least one important respect. For he observes another tendency in his lists of significant figures, which is that their numbers have declined noticeably in the course of the last century.

In the fields of science and philosophy, Murray explains this decline as follows:

> For many specialties within astronomy, biology, chemistry, geology, physics, and mathematics, the fundamental laws had been found decades or centuries earlier. In philosophy, some of the fundamental truths had been discovered not decades, not even centuries, but millennia earlier.

In the arts, however, Murray draws a different conclusion. Not only the number of great artists but the overall *quality* of artistic achievement has been in decline, he contends, since the late 19th century—that is, since the coming of the modernist movement.

"It is hard to make a case that the literature, art, and music of today come close to the best work of earlier ages, let alone signify progress," Murray remarks in the introduction to *Human Accomplishment*. This turns out to be one of his main themes, and at regular intervals he supplies the attentive reader with further clues as to his private judgment of the matter. In, for example, his description of the highest-scoring significant figures in Western art, he observes: "The presence of Picasso in second place will surprise and perhaps outrage some readers."

Anyone who fought last spring to get a ticket to the Museum of Modern Art's hugely popular Matisse-Picasso exhibition is likely to wonder just who could be "outraged" by Picasso's high index score, second only to Michelangelo's. The answer, one eventually concludes, is Charles Murray himself, for at book's end he brings his anti-modern views out into the open. Having previously argued that nihilism is antithetical to human accomplishment at the highest levels, Murray suggests here that primary responsibility for the measured decline in the objective significance of Western art lies precisely in the prevalence of nihilism among modernist artists:

> I hold that a stream of great accomplishment in the arts depends upon a culture's enjoying a well-articulated, widely held conception of the good. I suggest as well that art created in the absence of a well-articulated conception of the good is likely to be arid and ephemeral. . . . [F]or the arts, over a period starting in the late 1800's and extending through World War I, many of those who saw themselves engaged in high art consciously turned away from the idea that their function was to realize the beautiful, and then rejected the relevance of the true or the good as valid criteria for judging their work.

AS FAR as it goes, this statement is perfectly plausible. But Murray takes it implausibly far. Without offering any specific examples, he claims that "most of the serious novels from 1920-1950" are "arid and ephemeral." When it comes to the visual arts and music, his dismissal of modernism is even more categorical:

> [E]ach of the arts in the first half of [the 20th century] had a channel that was a lineal descendent of pre-[20th-century] traditions—men such as Stravinsky and Kandinsky, who were aware of the legacy and valued it, but sought, as artists had sought before, to use the raw materials of

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> great art in new ways for their own time. But they and other artists in this channel tended to come early . . . , and their numbers dwindled as time went on. The generalization remains: in large part, the visual art and concert music of [the 20th century] is what visual art and concert music become when their creators do not tap transcendental goods.

Once again, Murray is correct up to a point, but his sweeping and unspecific dismissal of 20th-century art drastically diminishes the force of his argument. Of course modernism produced far more than its share of nihilistic, antinomian art, as I and others have argued repeatedly. But it is impossible to read *Human Accomplishment* closely without starting to suspect that Murray simply does not know very much about modern art. (If he did, he would never have yoked Igor Stravinsky, the inventor of musical neoclassicism, with Wassily Kandinsky, the inventor of abstract art, much less offered Kandinsky as one of only two examples of the tradition-based modern artists whom he claims to respect.)

This suspicion is further strengthened by Murray's concluding remarks on the state of Western art today:

> The West's popular culture is for my money the only contemporary culture worth patronizing, with its best stories more compelling and revealing than the ones written by authors who purport to write serious novels, and its best popular music with more energy and charm than anything the academic composers turn out. . . . The people producing the best work include some who in another age could have been a Caravaggio or Brahms or Racine, and perhaps dozens of others good enough to have made their way onto the roster of significant figures.

No apologies need be made, certainly not by me, for Western popular culture at its not-infrequent best. But when Murray mentions the TV series *The Simpsons* and the films *Saving Private Ryan* and *Groundhog Day* (the only works of popular art cited by him as exemplary) in the same breath as Caravaggio, Brahms, and Racine, one inevitably wonders whether he has any business making critical judgments of any kind about art of any period.

That Murray is indiscriminately hostile to modernism seems clear enough. But has his hostility led him to go so far as to stack his statistical deck?

Even though a plausible case can be made for his decision to establish a cut-off date of 1950 for his lists of significant events and figures, doing so must have had some skewing effect on his data bases. In addition, he freely admits that the particular reference works from which his lists were compiled reflected a private agenda. "I am choosing one type of expertise and rejecting another," he writes, "allying myself with the classic aesthetic tradition and rejecting the alternative tradition that sprang up" in the 20th century.

The admission is admirably frank. In the end, though, it can only reinforce the impression that, for all of Murray's elaborate statistical apparatus, *Human Accomplishment* amounts to nothing more than a massive exercise in circular logic. Even those who believe as I do in the continuing validity of the "classic aesthetic tradition"—and who recognize, as Murray does not, that it is no less applicable to the great art of the tradition-conscious moderns—are likely to come away convinced that the author of *Human Accomplishment* has cut his analytic cloth to fit his aesthetic tastes.

Charles Murray's well-intentioned efforts notwithstanding, the question of whether or not it is possible to demonstrate objectively the existence of absolute standards of aesthetic quality will probably always remain open. That such absolute standards do exist, however, seems to me indisputable. No matter how aggressively postmodern thinkers may deny the significance of the consensus of judgment—or the overwhelming dominance of Western culture—the whole of human history and experience is arrayed against them. It cannot be coincidental that, as Clement Greenberg observed, "the people who try hardest and look hardest end up, over the ages, by agreeing with one another in the main."

What also seems indisputable, if *Human Accomplishment* is any indication, is that attempts to endow this striking concordance with the patina of quasi-scientific objectivity are probably doomed to failure. To which one may respond: so what? Ideology-blinded philistines who choose to deny the greatness of Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Rembrandt (or, for that matter, Proust, Stravinsky, and Matisse) will never be persuaded by any amount of evidence, statistical or otherwise. Again, so what? Experts or no experts, all music sounds the same to the tone-deaf.

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The "Right of Return"

Is it a valid demand, and how would it affect Middle-East peace?

Three years ago, President Clinton and Ehud Barak, then Prime Minister of Israel, made every effort to achieve final peace between Jews and Arabs. They offered the "Palestinians" 97 per cent of the "West Bank" and Gaza, the eastern part of Jerusalem as their capital, and $30 billion in refugee compensation. But Yasser Arafat did not accept this overly generous offer. He insisted on the "right of return," flooding Israel with as many as five million so-called "refugees." When this outrageous demand was not granted, he broke off negotiations and started his bloody intifida, the war against Israel, which by now has killed about 2,000 people on both sides and has left many thousands more wounded, many of them crippled for life.

What are the facts?

Who are the so-called "refugees?" On the very day that Israel declared its independence, five Arab states invaded the nascent Jewish state. In fiery broadcasts and confident of victory, their leaders urged the Arabs to flee the war zone, so as not to impede the invading armies. Once victory was achieved and after all the Jews had been killed or had fled, the Arabs could return, reclaim their property and loot that of the Jews.

Things didn't turn out that way. About 600,000 Arabs followed the call of their leaders and became refugees. About 200,000 accepted the promises of the Israeli authorities that they would not be harmed and that they would become citizens of the new state, with the same rights as the Jews. Hardly any of the original refugees are still alive. But those who claim to be their descendants (who astonishingly number as many as five million), clamor to "return" to Israel. With the single exception of Jordan, none of their Arab brethren have allowed them to settle in their countries and to become citizens. They have confined them to squalid refugee camps, supported by UNWRA (a dependency of the U.N. and financed mostly by the USA). Those refugee camps are seething hotbeds of hatred against Israel and are the sources for terrorists and suicide bombers.

> "Peace will never come about as long as the Arabs insist on the 'right of return'—a 'right' that can never and will never be granted."

Is the Palestinian "refugee" problem unique? Migrations of populations are nothing new in world history, especially after major wars. About 15 million Germans were (often brutally) expelled from what became western Poland, from what used to be East Prussia and from the Sudetenland. Millions of Muslims and Hindus, following bloody battles, migrated to India and to what became Pakistan. Other major migrations following the World Wars were those of the French from Algeria, Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Cypriots, Kurds and others. It is only the "Palestinians" who insist on being "repatriated." But more to the point, Israel has absorbed over 600,000 Jews who were expelled from Arab countries and millions of others from all over the world. All of them are productive citizens of their new country.

Since the founding of Israel in 1948, the Arabs have waged unrelenting wars to defeat the Jewish state, but they have been unable to do so by military means. The destruction of Israel, however, remains a cornerstone of the PLO charter, which has never been rescinded. What the Arabs have failed to achieve by force of arms they are now determined to accomplish demographically, by flooding Israel with millions of "Palestinians."

The "right of return" is the one concession that Israel can never grant and can never accept. The world must not forget that Israel was founded for one purpose only, namely to be the home of the Jewish people. Even today, more than twenty per cent of the population of Israel are Arabs, almost all of them hostile and a potential fifth column. Even if only a fraction of those who claim the "right of return" were indeed to come to Israel, the country would be swamped by Arabs, and Israel would cease to exist as a Jewish state.

According to the U.N., only those who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their home countries..." are considered "refugees." For instance, the Cubans who fled Castro are considered refugees, but their children and grandchildren living in Miami are not. Only the "Palestinians" have been granted special status by the U.N., by which all of their descendants, for generations to come, are considered "refugees." The purpose of this special status is to assist in the destruction of Israel. Israel is prepared to pay huge amounts in (unwarranted) compensation to those "refugees." But under no circumstances will it ever or should it ever accept the "right of return." What that would accomplish in one stroke would be the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state. Israel will never allow that to happen and the world should not request it either. The problem has to be solved by settling the "refugees" in any or all of the 22 Arab countries. Peace will never come about as long as the Arabs insist on the "right of return"—a "right" that can never and will never be granted.

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Dutton. 368 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
David Frum

"TELLING THE truth is something I take seriously, and I try to hold myself to an impossibly high standard."

This time, Al Franken may have set the bar too high. By his own account, the self-appointed scourge of right-wing lies and liars has something of a truth problem himself. But let him tell the story:

April 21, 2003

Dear Attorney General Ashcroft,

I am currently a fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where I am working on a book about abstinence programs in our public schools entitled, *Savin' It!*

. . . The book's fourth chapter, "Role Modelin' It!," will feature the personal stories of abstinence heroes for our nation's young people to emulate. . . .

I would very much appreciate it if you could share your abstinence story. So far, I have received wonderful testimonies from HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson, William J. Bennett, White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer, Cardinal Egan, Senator Rick Santorum, and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. (I'm still hoping to hear back from the President!)

And so on. The letter was a pretty obvious con, and none of the 28 people to whom Franken sent it was fooled. Somebody even tipped off the Kennedy School that Franken was misusing its stationery. He apologized to Harvard—but not to any of his intended victims.

Anybody can type out a deceitful letter. (Well, almost anybody.) To lie to people's faces—and to do it over and over again—requires a more hardened character. Franken, though, is up to the challenge. He devotes a lengthy chapter of this book to an "elaborate ruse" (his words) intended to extract embarrassing material about Bob Jones University. (Just why he thought this material—or, for that matter, his abstinence-education material—might be relevant to a book about right-wing lying is something of a mystery.) First he asked his son to submit a bogus application to Bob Jones; then, when the boy begged to be released, Franken had one of his research assistants apply, this time traveling with the assistant to South Carolina to pursue the joke in person.

They got caught. "Look," Franken reports the man from the public-liaison office saying, "We've had enough of being made fun of. . . . If you're legit, I'd be happy to show you anything you want to see. But we're not going to put our heads on the chopping block again." Franken acknowledges that "even while being hostile, [the man] was extremely nice about it."

Franken might well excuse these excursions into deception as come-

DAVID FRUM, *a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is co-author with Richard Perle of the forthcoming* An End to Evil: How to Win the War on Terror.

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dy—pure entertainment. But that only raises another mystery: how does a man who values truth so highly as Franken says he does, and is so plainly eager to have his readers think him a nice guy, convince himself that it is OK to deceive people in order to lure them into doing foolish things that will cause others to laugh at them? Is that not compounding deceit with cruelty?

BUT FRANKEN has an excuse for that, too: "I never lie. That is, unless it is absolutely necessary." And this time, one gathers, it has been absolutely necessary. For the latest book from America's most famous left-wing comic needs all the help it can get.

That may sound like a strange thing to say about a number-one bestseller. Franken is surely entitled to feel that his book has succeeded beyond all expectations. And, just as advertised, he and the fourteen research assistants provided him by Harvard University have caught some important conservative journalists and politicians in a number of embarrassing errors. Anne Coulter, for example, has identified *Newsweek*'s Washington bureau chief Evan Thomas as the son of Norman Thomas, the famous socialist politician of the 1920's and 30's. Evan Thomas is not Norman Thomas's son. He is his grandson. Gotcha.

And yet, even Al Franken's keenest fans may sense that, in most of the "lies" he detects, there is (shall we say) a lack of oomph. Who would lay out $24.95 to be told that George W. Bush's claim to have eliminated income taxes for millions of low-income taxpayers is a lie because it says nothing about payroll and excise taxes? If that kind of thing gets you excited, there are ten Democratic presidential candidates who will say it to you for free—and, if you live in Iowa or New Hampshire, even throw in a steak dinner or fish fry to thank you for listening.

No, the appeal of Franken's book cannot rest in its repetition of familiar Democratic talking points. It must rest, instead, on Franken's purported ability to transform familiar Democratic talking points into knee-slapping hilarity. But it is just there that *Lies* repeatedly fails.

Not that Franken is unamusing: there are bits of *Lies* that might elicit chuckles even from those who do not share his politics:

> God chose me to write this book. . . . The reason I know God chose me is because God spoke to me personally. God began our conversation by clearing something up. Some of George W. Bush's friends say that Bush believes God called him to be President during these times of trial. But God told me that He/She/It had actually chosen Al Gore by making sure that Gore won the popular vote and, God thought, the electoral college.
>
> "THAT WORKED FOR EVERYONE ELSE!," God said.
>
> "What about Tilden?," I asked, referring to the 1876 debacle.
>
> "QUIET!" God snapped.

As I say: chuckles. Humor is notoriously subjective, but I suspect that even the most die-hard Democrat will go many, many pages between belly laughs—pages that are instead filled with more characteristic charmers like this one:

> In contrast to [John Walker] Lindh's depraved [California] childhood environment, [conservative talk-show host Sean] Hannity trumpets his Long Island childhood in the protective embrace of the Catholic Church. Gee, nothing weird happened to cute little boys in the Catholic Church, eh, Sean? Nothing that would explain your bizarre fixation with our nation's homosexuals.

Not to be invidious, but the best right-wing funny men—P.J. O'Rourke, Rob Long, Mark Steyn—truly are laugh-out-loud funny. I have been on airplanes on days when Steyn's column is running in the local paper and heard the laughs exploding from the seat in front of me like artillery shells out of a howitzer. There is nothing howitzer-like about Franken. If he resembles anyone, it is Russell Baker, the *New York Times* humorist who churned out almost four decades' worth of columns that his admirers praised as "wry" and his non-admirers skipped for their intolerable smugness.

SO WHY, then, if it is not for the content, and not for the humor, are liberal-minded Americans buying up this book by the boxcar-load? (An Al Franken wannabe might reply, "What else are they going to read? Hillary?" But that would be mean-spirited.) Obviously, a book so successful is filling some vast, unmet need. What is it?

Let me attempt an answer. Today's liberal-Left confronts a baffling predicament. For the first time since the early 1950's, Republicans hold the presidency, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. For the first two years of the Bush presidency, liberals could dismiss this amazing breakthrough as the product of a freak presidential election. But then the Republicans went on to enlarge their majorities in the 2002 off-year elections—something that had not occurred under a Republican president since at least Teddy Roosevelt's time.

How to explain this crushing turn of events? In the 1980's, many Democrats had responded to a prior wave of Republican success, the one that gave the country first Richard Nixon and then Ronald Reagan, with similar bafflement and rage. But, back then, Democratic governors based in the practical world of state politics were able to exert some restraint upon their party's tendency, when cut off from power, to veer into bitterness, paranoia, and extremism. The governors created the Democratic Leadership Council, from which Bill Clinton rose to win the presidency.

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Today's Democrats are looking not for answers but for villains and scapegoats. This is the need that Al Franken's book satisfies—like Michael Moore's *Stupid White Men*, Eric Alterman's *What Liberal Media?*, and Joe Conason's *Big Lies* before it and like many more that are sure to follow. All of them propound a single message: "We Democrats did not lose power because of our own mistakes. We lost because we were cheated. We lost because the other side *lied*—and because it controls the media that allow it to lie and get away with lying."

Of course, conservatives and Republicans also devour books that bash the other side and the media, like Bernard Goldberg's *Bias* and Anne Coulter's *Slander*. But there is a noticeable difference between, for example, Goldberg's take on CBS and Franken's assessment of Fox News. Goldberg attacks media bias as an evil in itself. Franken blames right-wing media deceit for depriving liberals of the political power that is rightly theirs. "The members of the right-wing media are not interested in conveying the truth. That's not what they are for," writes Franken in a pair of sentences that (substituting "left-wing" for "right-wing") could easily have appeared in Goldberg's book. But the sentence that follows it could not: "They"—the media—"are an indispensable component of the right-wing machine that has taken over our country." In short, where Goldberg's is a book about the media, Franken's is a book about political power, about how those who should rightfully hold it have lost it, and about how to get it back.

"What went wrong?" is the question with which the eminent scholar Bernard Lewis titles his book about the intellectual history of the Muslim Middle East. How had the once-wealthy and all-conquering Muslim world been overtaken by the despised Christian West? Al Franken's *Lies* can be read as one Democrat's attempt to grapple with an analogous problem. Unfortunately, like the enraged Muslims whom we meet in Lewis's book, Franken repudiates both self-examination and self-criticism. It is all somebody else's fault. The faithful have nothing to learn from anybody. The solution to their problems is not reform, and it is certainly not self-criticism. It is a return to the fundamentals of the faith—and war against the unbelievers.

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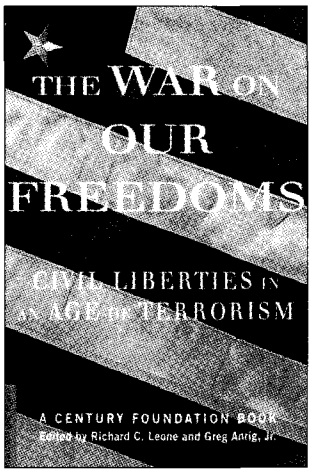
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Minority Report

No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning

by Abigail Thernstrom and Stephan Thernstrom

Simon & Schuster. 334 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Leslie Lenkowsky

IN ONE of the most remarked-upon passages of the Supreme Court's recent decision upholding the affirmative-action program of the University of Michigan Law School, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor looked ahead to the day when "student body diversity" could be achieved without resorting to special admissions procedures for black and Hispanic applicants. As she wrote, "We expect that 25 years from now, the use of racial preferences will no longer be necessary to further the interest approved today." Unfortunately, judging by the strong consensus that has emerged among researchers of all political stripes in recent years, there is little likelihood that Justice O'Connor's hope will be realized unless there are major changes in the educational environment of minority children.

The latest study to reach this conclusion comes from Abigail and Stephan Thernstrom, scholars who have devoted most of their careers to analyzing problems of race and ethnicity in the United States. (Both are now senior fellows at the Manhattan Institute in addition to their posts, respectively, on the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and in the history department at Harvard.) *No Excuses* assembles an impressive array of evidence to demonstrate that the "typical" (in the statistical sense) black or Hispanic child in the U.S. enters school behind, and stays behind. Recent books from liberal think tanks like the Brookings Institution have reached similar conclusions. What makes the Thernstroms' contribution distinctive and valuable is that they also identify a path forward, a way to begin tackling what they aptly call "the most important civil-rights issue of our time."

AS THE Thernstroms show in their first chapter, drawing extensively on data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the average minority student in the U.S. now leaves high school performing at a level approximately four years behind his white and Asian peers. A *majority* of black twelfth graders, they note, have scores ranking them "below basic" in five of the seven subjects tested by the NAEP. Moreover, since narrowing in the 1970's and early 1980's, the academic-achievement gap has grown. This disparity not only makes it less likely that black and Hispanic students will succeed in higher education but, more broadly, blights their economic and social prospects, which increasingly depend on possessing marketable skills and knowledge.

As the Thernstroms see it, none of the usual explanations—differences in family income, in public spending on schools, in heredity—is sufficient to explain the racial disparities in achievement. What matters most (along with how schools are run) is the cultural background that students bring with them to class, especially their attitude toward learning. Devoting a chapter to the educational ethos of each of the country's three largest minority groups, the Thernstroms show that Asian children tend to approach school with the kind of outlook they need to succeed, while black children—including those whose parents are relatively educated and well-off—typically do not, a finding also true of the offspring of the more recent waves of Hispanic immigrants. The underlying problem, in short, is one of family upbringing, usually reinforced by the expectations of friends from similar homes.

Although the role of culture remains a sensitive subject among education scholars, there is now considerable agreement that such factors have a lot to do with achievement. This was not always the case, as the Thernstroms note. When the sociologist James S. Coleman, in his landmark 1966 study, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*, concluded that family mattered more than school spending in explaining the educational level of minority students, his work was denounced and virtually ignored. Numerous studies since then, however—not to mention the meager results produced in the intervening years by substantial increases in education spending—have generally substantiated Coleman's once-heretical conclusion.

The Thernstroms do not pretend to have a program for changing these deeply ingrained patterns, but they believe that schools themselves can do far more to instill students with a "culture of success." Some public schools, in fact, are already doing well at closing the racial gap in achievement, and, like Tolstoy's happy families, they have a great deal in common.

The main thing they have in common is that they are charter schools—public schools freed from many of the usual rules and regulations and chosen by the parents whose children attend them. These schools often have high expectations for learning and a willingness to demand the sacrifices (by parents, as well as by students) necessary to meet these expectations. They carefully select teachers who share their philosophy and give them extra training and support. Not least, many charter schools emphasize content-rich curricula

LESLIE LENKOWSKY, *a visiting fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is on leave from Indiana University, where he is professor of philanthropic studies and public policy.*

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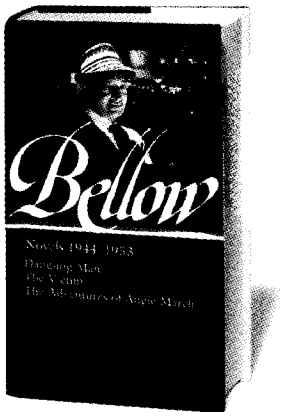
over the lighter subject-matter associated with "progressive" education, and they also stress discipline. The Thernstroms' foremost model of this approach is an effort called the "Knowledge Is Power Program" (KIPP), which they discuss at some length, in part to show how successfully it has been replicated in a variety of urban settings.

Skeptics will point out that few charter schools have been around long enough to be carefully evaluated. Also, the Thernstroms dismiss perhaps too quickly the charge that these schools succeed in some measure by "creaming" off the most motivated parents and students. As for the case the Thernstroms do make for charter schools, it would have been strengthened by reference to another finding from James Coleman's study. He showed that, in addition to family and peer group, a key influence on how minority children perform in school is their "sense of control of the environment." I suspect that charter schools, like the parochial schools that participate in voucher programs, succeed with black and Hispanic city children in part because they are able to implant in them a sense of personal and social confidence, a feeling that they have a part to play in a shared mission. Such schools create hope, even faith.

Where *No Excuses* succeeds admirably is in making its central point: that schools can make a big difference in how much children learn, even children whose families give them little academic support. The yet-to-be-answered question is how many more students can be expected to gain access to—and benefit from—the sort of schools described by the Thernstroms.

Expanding the "culture of success" will require, they write, a "fundamental change in the structure of American education." The testing and achievement standards set out by the Bush administration

SAUL BELLOW
Novels 1944–1953



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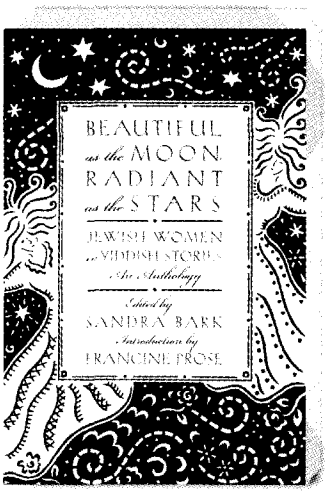

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in the "No Child Left Behind" act are just a start. The real problems, the Thernstroms believe, lie far deeper, in the inflexibility and inertia of our state and big-city public-school bureaucracies, where the teachers' unions hold powerful sway. More latitude for schools and their administrators (and perhaps more money, too); more charter schools and voucher experiments; more activism and involvement on the part of disgruntled urban parents—these are the necessary ingredients of future success in bridging the racial achievement gap.

Will any of it happen? The Thernstroms are encouraged by what they see happening around the country—"the first cracks in the [public-school] edifice"—but they are also realistic. Unlike Justice O'Connor, they understand that, when it comes to reversing the cultural deficits of America's most disadvantaged students, 25 years is distressingly little time indeed.

Born in the U.S.A.

The Namesake
by Jhumpa Lahiri
Houghton-Mifflin. 291 pp. $24.00

The Fortress of Solitude
by Jonathan Lethem
Doubleday. 511 pp. $26.00

Reviewed by
Sam Munson

THESE TWO coming-of-age novels, both of them released in the last months to much acclaim, are set in different environments but treat a common theme. Jhumpa Lahiri, who won a Pulitzer Prize for her short-story collection *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999), here focuses on the American-born son of Bengali immigrants living in Boston. Jonathan Lethem, the author of *Motherless Brooklyn* (2000), takes as his protagonist the child of a bohemian mother and artist father in 1970's Brooklyn. Living more or less as strangers among their family and friends, both heroes take their places in a line of figures in American literature that stretches from Henry Adams to Henry Roth and beyond—alienated children who inhabit two worlds but are at home in neither.

In *The Namesake*, Gogol Ganguli, born in 1968 and named by his father after the great Russian writer Nikolai Gogol, is pressured by his immigrant parents to excel in school, to neglect all things impractical—like developing a budding talent for figure drawing—and above all to succeed. Whether or not he ever does so remains uncertain; what is certain is that in the course of his struggles he becomes increasingly American, sating himself with television and on the junk food—like "individually wrapped slices of cheese [and] bologna"—that his parents provide him but refuse to eat themselves. Before heading off to Yale, he even adopts the name Nikhil instead of Gogol because to his ear it sounds more "American."

At Yale, Nikhil/Gogol studies architecture, that most Anglo-Saxon of professions, and for the rest of the novel, which ends with the dissolution of his marriage in 2000, when he is all of thirty-two, he spends his life more or less exclusively in the company of young professionals in New York. His principal love affair is with Maxine, the daughter of arty New York aristocrats. Only his father's sudden death precipitates a partial return to his origins, sealed by his marriage to a Bengali woman, Moushumi, who is another conflicted child of immigrants. His return journey, such as it is, is completed when Moushumi leaves him and Gogol at last opens the book of stories written by his namesake that had been given to him by his father on his fourteenth birthday. The novel closes on a dinner party in Gogol's mother's home where he has, at last, accepted the role of reluctant host.

Jonathan Lethem's *The Fortress of Solitude* is set not only farther south on the east coast but farther south on the socioeconomic scale. Dylan Ebdus, Lethem's protagonist (and part-time narrator) grows up white among the blacks and Hispanics of the Boerum Hill neighborhood of Brooklyn, simultaneously their mascot and a victim of their petty crimes. Timid and confused, he strikes up an uneasy friendship with the self-possessed Mingus Rude, the only child of a coke-addled, has-been black musician. Their tense interracial friendship judders along, complete with the obligatory adolescent homoeroticism, until Dylan comes into possession of a magical ring that grants the power of flight—Lethem is a great proponent of magical realism—enabling the two boys to become low-rent superheroes.

But the idyll cannot last. The pair grow apart as Dylan becomes assimilated into the world of Manhattan at Stuyvesant High School, while Mingus, falsely accused of the murder of his father, embarks on a life of crime. After a pause for a brief narrative of the career of Mingus's father (in the form of liner notes written by an older Dylan on the re-release of his work), the action resumes with Dylan's having become a music journalist in Berkeley and acquired both an insufferable girlfriend and generally dismal prospects in life. In his need to effect some change, he sets out to find Mingus, now doing a long stretch in prison, and at great risk gets the magic ring to him in the hopes that he will use it to escape. This small

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SAM MUNSON *reviewed Azar Nafisi's* Reading Lolita in Tehran *in our September issue.*

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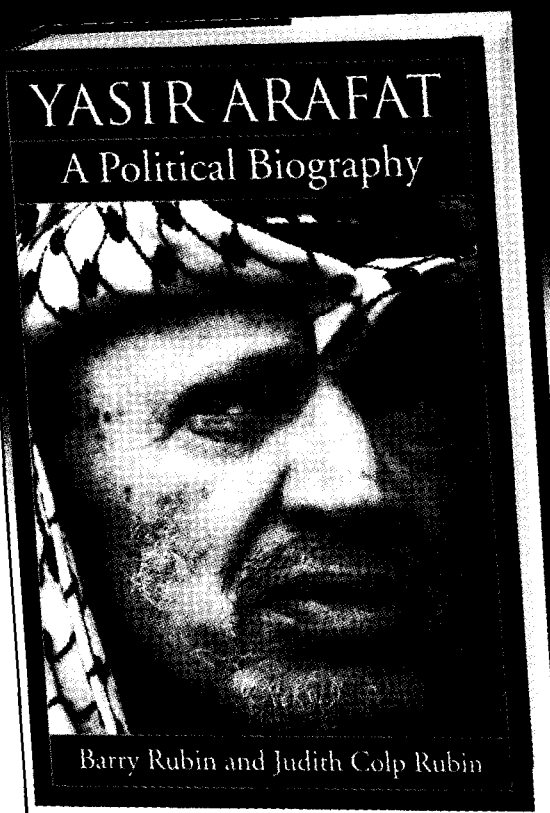

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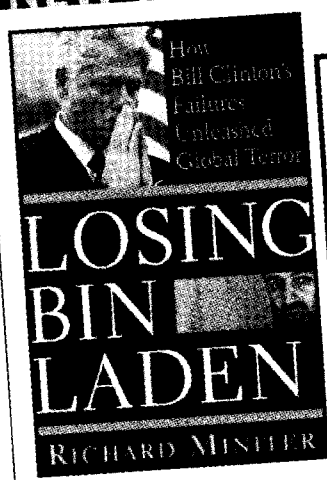

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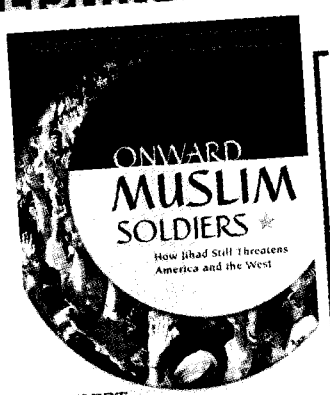

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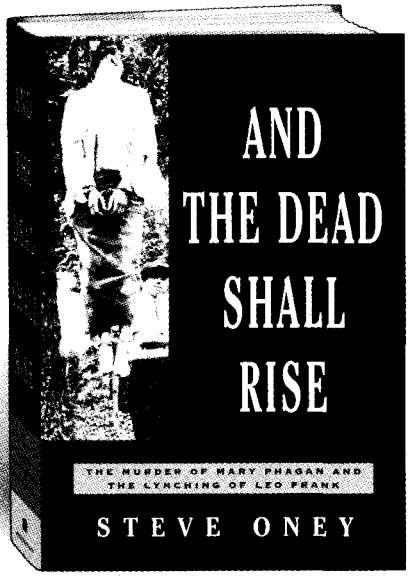

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—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

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redemption is denied him when Mingus uses the ring to commit suicide.

DESPITE THE great differences between them in style and tone, *The Namesake* and *The Fortress of Solitude* are beset with many of the same problems. Chief among them is the shapelessness to which every novel dealing with childhood and its sequels seems prone; even Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, perhaps the seminal American work of the genre, is not free of it.

In the case of *The Namesake* the problem stems pretty clearly from an excess of dispassionateness: Lahiri's novel is linear to the point of monotony. This is something of a surprise. In her highly (and rightly) praised debut collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, Lahiri showed herself capable of a vast range of subtle narrative colors. *The Namesake*, by contrast, sounds but a single note, and that repeatedly, as Gogol goes through the same set of motions with the same uneasy indifference throughout: unsure of himself in primary school, unsure of himself at Yale, unsure of himself as he studies for his licensing exam as an architect.

Gogol's women, too, pass in and out of his life with an unchanging absence of any incident worth remarking upon. Lahiri glides over the end of his relationship with Maxine: "Initially she tolerated his silences at the dinner table, his indifference in bed. . . . Quickly they had begun to fight about these things"—and it is over, in one paragraph. His college girlfriend is dealt with no less summarily.

In *Interpreter of Maladies*, such moments would be seized upon and stretched to a point of excruciating, almost unbearable, tension. Here, Lahiri may want to illustrate the blankness and disaffection that plague her protagonist, but the effect is to leave Gogol without substance and therefore without interest: in the all too accurate words of

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one character in the book, just another "ABCD: American-born confused *deshi*." Although *The Namesake* does occasionally rise to the level of which Lahiri is manifestly capable—in a scene of Gogol and his father on a desolate beach, in the train wreck that jolts his father into an awareness of the ephemeral nature of human existence—these moments only serve in the end to underline the flatness of the whole.

The Fortress of Solitude is hardly flat—if anything, it is too bumpy. Its opening lines are a collision of inept simile and inept metaphor with inept symbolism:

> Like a match struck in a darkened room:
>
> Two white girls in flannel nightgowns and red vinyl roller skates with white laces, tracing tentative circles on a cracked blue slate sidewalk at seven o'clock on an evening in July.
>
> The girls murmured rhymes, *were* murmured rhymes.

Nor does the going get any smoother. No doubt in an effort to evoke the sensual richness of a childhood in New York City, Lethem packs every paragraph with portentousness: "Outside, Dean Street moaned in an ailment of humidity"; "Nevins Street was a river of unhappiness running through the land of Dean Street." The resulting impression is not one of sensual overload, let alone of poetic flight, but rather of authorial desperation.

Something similar could be said of Lethem's attempts to ground the novel in its time and place through unceasing references to popular culture; Chevy Chase, Ray Charles, Wild Cherry's "Play That Funky Music," Devo, and crack cocaine all put in stagey appearances, to no particular use. They seem merely to have been crammed in as proofs of authenticity, just as, at the beginning of the book's third section, we are subjected to a gratuitous catalogue of the CD's Dylan thinks of bringing with him to Los Angeles. In the meantime, the Boerum Hill of the 1970's, which must have been a fascinating place, lapses into obscurity.

But the novel's biggest disappointment is Dylan himself, who is made of exceptionally thin stuff. About his inner life we learn very little other than that he feels uncomfortable in Brooklyn as a child, in Vermont as a college student, and in Berkeley as an adult. Since he also serves as his author's chosen lens on reality, it is perhaps no wonder that the world around him tends to assume a similar characterlessness. Like Gogol in *The Namesake*, Dylan remains without shape, and so, for all of Lethem's strenuous protestations, does the world he inhabits.

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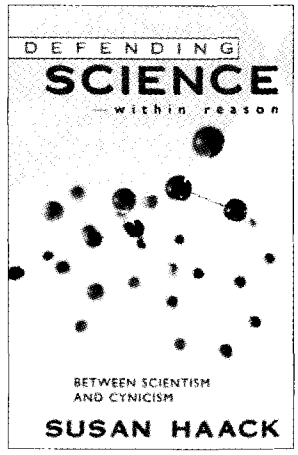

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THE "DIFFERENT" child, particularly the child of immigrants or of an ethnic minority, is a figure of great resonance in American novels. One thinks of David Schearl, the protagonist of *Call It Sleep*, of John Grimes in James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, and of a host of others. The daughter in Jhumpa Lahiri's short story, "When Mr. Pirzada Came To Dine," is, in a quiet way, another such figure: isolated, delicate vessels, all, for the tensions and insecurities of American life. Next to them, Gogol and Dylan pale.

Why that should be so is an interesting question. Could it be that this emblematic figure has become somehow obsolete, rendered irrelevant either by the homogenized sameness of the American landscape or, conversely, by the sheer kaleidoscopic variety of American experience? Whatever the case, the unfortunate fact about these two overly hyped novels is that they leech the color not only out of their protagonists but out of the small, troubled, vibrant worlds that produced them.

Bench Press

Coercing Virtue:
The Worldwide Rule of Judges
by Robert H. Bork
AEI. 161 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM has no more ferocious a critic than Robert Bork. As a federal judge, a professor at Yale Law School, and a famously mau-maued Supreme Court nominee, he has tirelessly exhorted courts to stay true to the original meaning of the U.S. Constitution, and to leave policy-making to legislators. In *Coercing Virtue: The Worldwide Rule of Judges*, Bork returns to his favorite topic, tracing the continued rise of judicial activism in the United States and describing its contagion internationally.

In Bork's telling, the roots of judicial activism in America were put down in *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford* (1857). In that notorious case, the Supreme Court forbade Congress from outlawing slavery in the federal territories because such a prohibition would deprive slaveholders of property without "due process of law." The decision not only furthered the evil of human bondage, it also set the doctrinal table for generations of future judges by converting the Fifth Amendment's due-process clause "from a guarantee of a proper process in the application of law to a guarantee of a proper substance."

Early in the 20th century, conservative Justices seized on this notion to declare a constitutionally enshrined "liberty of contract" as they struck down labor laws and elements of the New Deal. Decades later, the Court would invoke "due process" to bolster the Left in the culture wars, creating a "right of privacy" that protected, among other things, access to contraceptives and abortion. More recently, in cases on nude dancing, homosexual rights, and the admissions policies of all-male military colleges, the Court has fallen under the sway of "New Class" elites, composed, in Bork's description, of journalists, academics, denizens of Hollywood, and various activist groups.

BUT THE extension of law and judicial authority beyond their proper sphere has not been a uniquely American phenomenon. As Bork points out, international law has fallen prey to similar problems, particularly when it comes to questions of war. The Nuremberg trials after World War II, he believes, were a mistake, at least insofar as they

JONATHAN KAY *is the editorials editor of the* National Post *in Toronto.*

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"were presented as the proceedings of courts of law." Though the prosecution of Nazi leaders was eminently justifiable from a moral perspective, the trials set in motion the futile and dangerous idea "that law can control the use of force and atrocities inflicted upon individuals or groups."

When questions of war are turned into questions of law, Bork argues, their moral component often gives way to matters of form and procedure. This does not bother the Left-leaning lawyers and activists who dominate the international bar. It leaves them free to ignore Communist gulags and terrorist training camps while they knit the ill-defined and infinitely malleable strands of international "customary" law into indictments of the United States, Israel, and other hated Western powers. At the same time, Bork observes, defenders of those same countries' interventions, appealing to international rules that "must not express a preference for freedom over tyranny," are placed at a permanent disadvantage. As he summarizes the perversity of the situation:

> I once listened to a professor of international law defend the United States' actions in Grenada. The argument seemed tortured and artificial. . . . When he was done, I asked whether three factors that most Americans deemed relevant to the matter counted in international law. First, the Grenadan government consisted of a minority that had seized control by violence and maintained it by terror. Second, it was a Marxist-Leninist regime and represented a further advance in the hemisphere of a power that threatened freedom and democracy. . . . Third, the people of Grenada were ecstatic at being relieved of tyranny. . . . The expert replied, somewhat sadly, that these considerations had no weight in international law.

Coercing Virtue concludes with two case studies that demonstrate how the tendencies of the U.S. system have been exported to other national courts, with predictable results. Bork's first example is Canada, whose Charter of Rights and Freedom, created in 1982, has from the outset been a favorite vehicle for social engineers of the Left. Even though the Canadian Parliament explicitly chose not to include sexual orientation in the charter's anti-discrimination provisions, the country's high court has invoked the charter to protect the rights of homosexuals. It has likewise struck down limits on abortion, rewritten ancient Indian treaties, and effectively outlawed capital punishment.

But the prize for judicial activism goes, in Bork's view, to the supreme court of Israel. Though the Jewish state has no formal constitution, Aharon Barak, the long-serving chief justice, has set out to subordinate every facet of Israeli government—every law, every executive decision, every political appointment—to his court's judgment. And, in large measure, he has succeeded, even in vital matters of defense and national security. Worse, the Israeli high court operates virtually without check, since the committee that picks new judges is itself dominated by sitting judges.

Bork's treatment of judicial activism in the U.S. will have a familiar ring to readers of his previous works. With the addition of withering commentary on the most controversial cases of the 1990's, *Coercing Virtue* essentially updates his 1989 classic, *The Tempting of America*.

If there is a shortcoming in this part of the book, it is Bork's failure to engage the critics of his own jurisprudence of "original understanding." Attractive though it undoubtedly sounds to apply the Constitution according to the principles of the generation that established it, it is not always so easy to divine the intent of the framers and rati-

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fiers, especially when one is dealing with complex modern disputes. We may know with some certainty what the founders thought of capital punishment, but it is far less clear what they would make of, say, warrantless police searches using air-borne infrared imaging, a controversial technique used for detecting hydroponic drug-growing operations. One misses, too, any discussion by Bork of *conservative* activism on the bench, not just in *Bush* v. *Gore* but in a series of federalism cases as well.

What is new and valuable in *Coercing Virtue* is Bork's discussion of judicial overreaching abroad. Though the book was written before the Iraq war, it is a penetrating and timely contribution to the ongoing debate about its legality. Indeed, there could be no better illustration of Bork's thesis about the failings of international law than the insistence of Jacques Chirac and Kofi Annan that the U.S. lacked authority to depose a genocidal dictator because Angola, Cameroon, Syria, and the other members of the UN Security Council refused to grant their imprimatur.

Bork is plainly distressed by the continuing influence of such arguments, as he is by the seemingly unshakable grip of activist judges in the U.S. and other Western democracies. One detects in *Coercing Virtue*, however, not so much anger as resignation. As Bork concedes, Western populations have been largely quiescent in the face of their judges' imperial ambitions. Even legislatures, which have the most to lose from the encroachment of courts on policy-making, protest only feebly and irregularly. Elected representatives often express relief, privately, that judges have taken divisive issues like abortion and gay rights out of their hands.

Though he is loath to say so directly, this great critic of judicial activism may feel that his battle has been lost. For the sake of our democratic health, not just in the U.S. but in the West as a whole, one hopes he is wrong.

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Alfred Kazin's America:
Critical and Personal Writings
edited and introduced
by Ted Solotaroff
HarperCollins. 542 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Thomas L. Jeffers

ALFRED KAZIN (1915-1998) was a New York intellectual—part cultural historian, part literary critic, part memoirist—who identified less with this or that coterie than with our national culture *in toto*. As a cultural historian, he made his precocious debut at age twenty-seven with *On Native Grounds*, a brilliant study of American prose from 1890 to 1940. As a literary critic, he measured the work of his contemporaries, running in his day from the novelists William Faulkner and Graham Greene to the poets Robert Lowell and James Wright. As a memoirist—*Walker in the City* (1951), *Starting Out in the Thirties* (1962), *New York Jew* (1978)—he wrote passages evocative of an era, a city, and a set of people, Jews and Gentiles alike, that have remained eminently readable.

Kazin contributed many essays and autobiographical studies to these pages, from the earliest issues in 1945 through the mid-1970's. From the late 30's on, his name was rarely absent from magazines such as the *New Republic*, the *Reporter*, the *New Yorker*, the *Atlantic*, or the *New York Times Book Review*. It is fair to say that after 1945, when Kazin, his reputation already made by *On Native Grounds*, returned from working as a journalist in England, he became, by dint of talent, energy, and desire, one of a handful of acknowledged arbiters of critical judgment in America—challenging though never surpassing the preeminence of Lionel Trilling, his senior by ten years, on a par with Irving Howe, his near-contemporary, and uncatchable by younger rivals like Susan Sontag. *On Native Grounds*, in any event, has remained, along with a handful of works by D. H. Lawrence, Perry Miller, F. O. Matthiessen, and Leslie Fiedler, an irreplaceable book in American literary studies.

THOSE WHO are unfamiliar with Kazin, or who miss him, can now turn to this new collection with its generous offerings from the three memoirs, from *On Native Grounds*, from the follow-up *Bright Book of Life* (1973), which covers writers from Ernest Hemingway to Nor-

THOMAS L. JEFFERS *is the editor of* The Norman Podhoretz Reader, *forthcoming from the Free Press in January. His "What Remains of Robert Lowell?" appeared in last month's* COMMENTARY.

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man Mailer, and from *An American Procession* (1984), largely about American Renaissance and post-Civil War writers (Ralph Waldo Emerson to Stephen Crane). There are also assorted pieces, several reprinted for the first time, on 20th-century formidables such as Ezra Pound, Hannah Arendt, and Edmund Wilson.

The editor, Ted Solotaroff, introduces Kazin in a way that occasionally omits data any reader would want to have (Kazin's dates, fuller identification of people casually mentioned) and expatiates too much on European figures who are not really relevant to this collection of Americana. But Solotaroff does offer the lineaments of a biography and a ranking of Kazin's output, rightly judging that the later writings—especially *An American Procession* and *God and the American Writer* (1988)—were much less on-point than what had come before. Solotaroff blames this falling-off on the mood of "the early Reagan years, which Kazin regarded as the rock bottom of American politics," leaving him feeling "woeful/cynical" like Henry Adams rather than democratic/progressive like Walt Whitman.

Whether or not this judgment is correct, a pumped-up Whitmanic optimism—a sense of America's people, joined together in free pursuit of happiness and given voice by their novelists and poets—does indeed imbue Kazin's amazing first book. I have always been moved by the story of its research and composition—the graduate of City College, the sometime reviewer for the *New Republic*, working between 1938 and 1941 in the main reading room of the New York Public Library and managing, through communion with the spirits of "all the birds [that] began to sing" during the early decades of the 20th century, to pick up an emotional as well as intellectual experience that belied his tender years.

What is the style of Kazin's critical writing in *On Native Grounds*? For starters, it is a style extremely inward with, not to say trapped inside, its subject: if you have not read, for example, Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*, *The Age of Innocence*, or *The House of Mirth*, or if you are not already familiar with her education, marriage, friendships, and social milieu, you cannot expect much help from Kazin, who provides no plot summaries and is highly allusive with regard to lives and times. What you do get from him is something else, arguably as valuable. So skilled a portraitist is Kazin that whatever writer happens to be "sitting" for him becomes a veritable presence, a human being tense with ideas and passions, informed by experience and overflowing with stories reflective of it—in other words, someone you want to read, who has something to say not only to you but even about you as an American.

The same quality distinguishes most of his later histories as well. Better than Trilling, who temperamentally was drawn more to London and Paris than to Omaha or Milwaukee, Kazin mentally occupied the middle of the American continent through the novels of Sinclair Lewis, Hamlin Garland, Willa Cather, *et al.*, just as he occupied New England and New York through Wharton and Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Bernard Malamud, or the South through Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor. His writings on American literature constitute a series of love arias to the American idea as he apprehended it—a celebration of how the New World afforded people the chance to become what their talents and energies were capable of, regardless of birth. That idea could be realized only gradually, over many generations, and it was Kazin's purpose to trace the literary record of its realization.

Of course, some writers are better suited to Kazin's characteristic afflatus than others. In *On Native Grounds*, his prose soars in the

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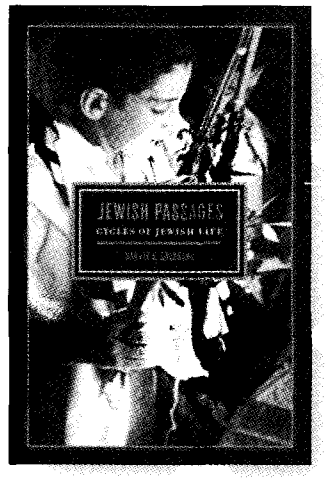

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company of transcendentalists or socialists enthusiastic for New World possibilities, but sobers up considerably when accompanying a realist or naturalist disillusioned with the timetable for liberty's victory or skeptical of any victory at all. Since the best late-19th- and early-20th-century writers were generally disillusioned, Kazin faced (and did not always rise to) a stiff challenge balancing them against the socialists whom he sentimentally favored.

THE KEY word is sentimental. We meet the adolescent Kazin, reading in his mother's Brownsville kitchen, absorbing his father's ardent socialism, walking the city streets in search of direct experience, in the autobiographical passages from *Walker in the City* that adorn this new collection. Those passages can be plaintive in the extreme ("Papa, where are they taking me? Where in this beyond are they taking me?" he asks about the journey over Brooklyn Bridge), and, in piling up the sights, sounds, smells, and textures of his boyhood, the writing is never less than self-consciously poignant. Reading a passage from *Walker in the City* about the young Kazin's crush on Jesus ("Yeshua"), we may feel as Oscar Wilde did in another context—that one has to have a heart of stone not to laugh:

> *O altitudo!*, the journey into that other land of *flax*, of summer, eternal summer, through which *he* had walked, wrapped in a blue-and-white prayer shawl, and, still looking back at me with the heartbreaking smile of recognition from a fellow Jew [etc., etc.] . . .
>
> I had known him instantly. Surely I had been waiting for him all my life—our own Yeshua, misunderstood by his own, like me, but the very embodiment of everything I had waited so long to hear from a Jew—a great contempt for the minute daily business of the world; a deep and joyful turning back into our own spirit.

And so, ecstatically, on—and very off.

This faux-religious enthusiasm—which Kazin *qua* fledgling socialist linked with a "furious old Jewish impatience with *Success*, with comfort, with eating, with the rich, with the whole shabby superficial fashionable world itself"—was not only reductive Judaism but a badly controlled romanticism. It both inflated and severely narrowed Kazin's political philosophy all his life. In the 30's, he followed left-wing anti-Stalinists like Norman Thomas and Max Eastman, partly because they were handsome bon vivants, partly because they made Marxism seem like a social application of good old American pragmatism.

As an observer, admittedly, he was capable of noticing that there were alternatives. Among the various characters who surrounded him in his young manhood, and about whom he writes in *Starting Out in the Thirties*, there was a

> horribly experienced Polish veteran of the revolutionary wars, a kindly but despairing expert on all socialists and socialisms. . . . He had been through it all—the easy idealism of socialist students, the militancy of the Syndicalists, the world-shaking mystique of the Communists just after 1917—and he could never again trust politicians of any stripe. Power corrupted everyone, and perhaps no one so much as the administrators, experts, professionals, intellectuals, who sought dictatorial powers over the working class in the name of their emancipation from capitalism.

This is a fine moment, in which Kazin's literary talent works like a novelist's. In this unnamed Pole, I see someone from whom Kazin might have learned something—namely, a species of liberalism that, by the 70's, would become neoconservatism. But he did not learn: in the 80's he dismissed the neoconservatives as "all rightniks" who, betraying his vision of the Yeshua-socialist tradition, were bowing to the bitch-goddess "*Success*" and selling out to Ronald Reagan.

Well, this too has been a corner of America. If Kazin was unable to learn from the one seriously disenchanted person he found amid the socialist tribe in the 30's, it was not entirely fatal to his writing as a historian. When one reads him at his appreciating best, especially in *On Native Grounds*, one may notice that he is much better at replicating than at assessing the American cacophony—all that Whitmanic enthusiasm colliding with all that Dreiserian realism—but somehow it does not matter. He has learned all the birds' songs, and he makes you want to hum along.

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David R. Henderson is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Many people worry that the decline in U.S. manufacturing employment is a sign of U.S. economic decline.That worry is understandable, but a closer look shows that **the loss of manufacturing jobs is a sign of economic health.**

Here are the facts. In July of this year, 14.6 million Americans were employed in manufacturing. This is a 17 percent decline from the peak of 17.6 million in March 1998. But over that same period, manufacturing output actually grew slightly, even with a recession in between. How could that be? Simple. Productivity in manufacturing—output per worker—grew substantially. In other words, we are making more goods with fewer workers.

Isn't manufacturing falling as a share of gross domestic product (GDP)? Yes. And, as my Hoover colleague Robert Hall pointed out in recent congressional testimony, it has been falling fairly steadily since 1947. The reason is that the tremendous productivity growth in manufacturing has caused prices of manufactured goods to fall relative to prices of health care, education, and other services. So even though manufacturing output has risen, GDP accounts value this output at market prices, which have been falling. You are not worse off because you can buy two televisions for the same amount (inflation adjusted), that you would have paid for one lower-quality television twenty years ago. You are better off. In fact, the declining prices of manufactured goods are one of the main reasons per capita income and wealth have grown so much since World War II.

One consequence of increased productivity, of course, is loss of manufacturing jobs. That is a hardship for workers who were previously employed in manufacturing. But they find work elsewhere. In other words, they produce other goods or services that help increase our standard of living. The only way to prevent the loss of manufacturing jobs is to impose draconian restrictions that bind workers to manufacturing and make productivity growth illegal Besides reducing our freedom, such restrictions would also freeze our standard of living. **The history of economic growth is the history of people making more with less and shifting into new jobs that were unheard of in the previous generation.** Because Henry Ford produced millions of cars on assembly lines, workers producing buggies lost their jobs. And, ten years later, most of them were probably glad they did.

Of course, some of the job loss is due to the fact that we buy goods from China and other low-wage countries. But that is just another way of saying that we have better uses for our labor here If you take your clothes to a dry cleaner, you "lose the job" of cleaning your clothes at home. And you'll take that loss every day—the time you free up is better used in leisure activities or in working more Similarly, we are better off buying mass-produced, low-wage goods from China and producing high-end services and intellectual property here in the United States.

The decline in manufacturing jobs, whether due to higher productivity or freer trade, is a boon to Americans.

— David R. Henderson

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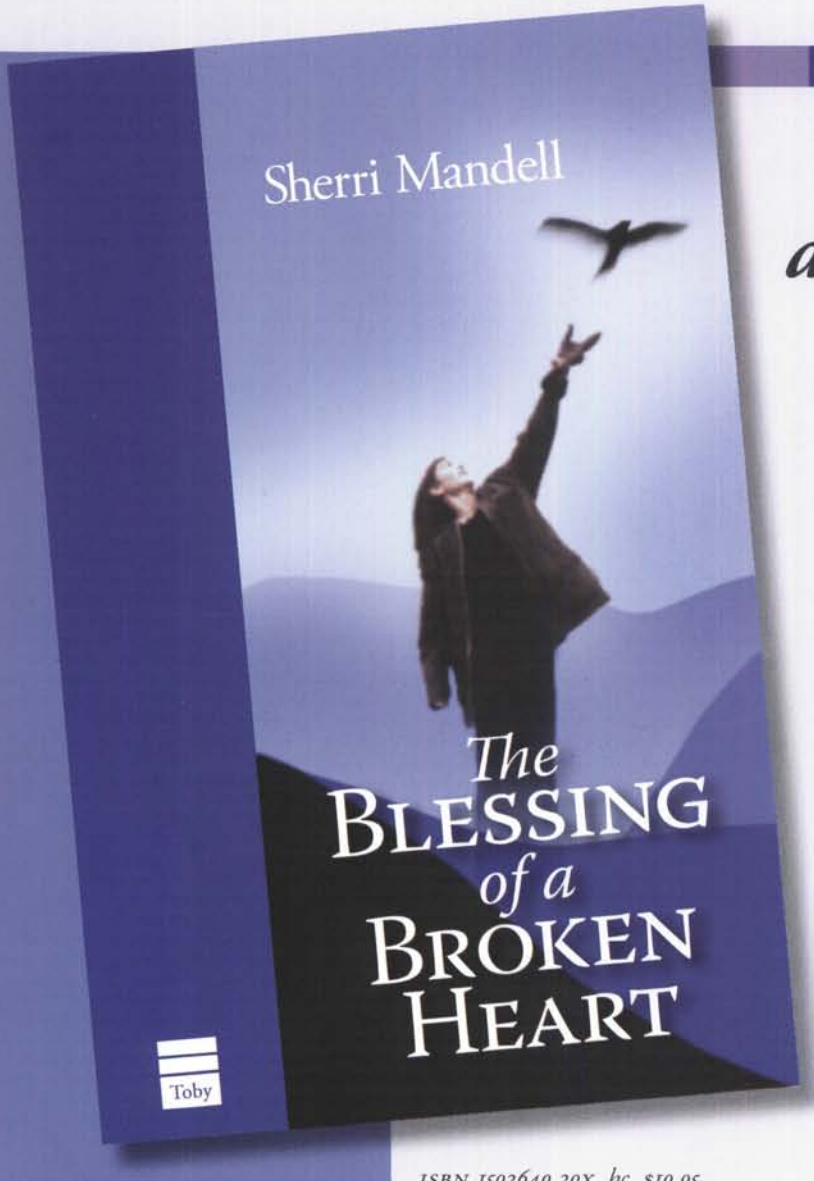

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